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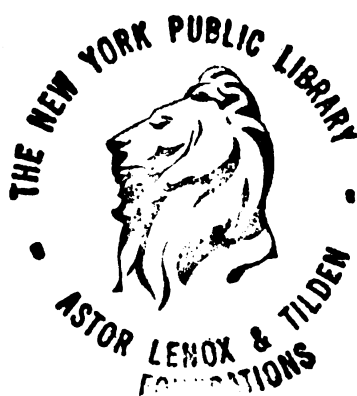
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OPERATIVE MASONRY OF THE MIDDLE AGES

NEW — REVISED — ENLARGED

Mackey's History of Freemasonry

BY

ROBERT INGHAM CLEGG, 33°

WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MANY
EMINENT AUTHORITIES
INCLUDING

WILLIAM JAMES HUGHAN

PAST SENIOR GRAND DEACON, GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND;
PAST SENIOR GRAND WARDEN, EGYPT;
PAST SENIOR GRAND WARDEN, IOWA, ETC.

*And ye shall know the truth, and the
truth shall make you free.*

The Gospel according to
SAINT JOHN, VIII: 32

*Without knowledge there can be no sure
progress.*

CHARLES SUMNER

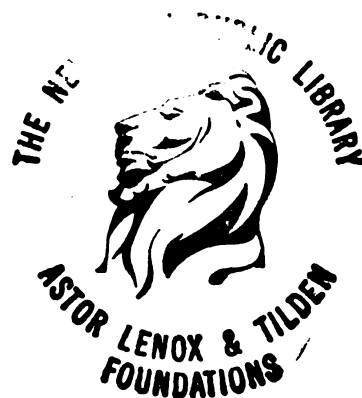


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CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

THE ROYAL SOCIETY AND FREEMASONRY



WE will now examine the hypothesis that Freemasonry was instituted in the 17th century and in the reign of Charles II., by a set of philosophers and scientists who organized it under the title of the "Royal Society." This is the last of those theories which try to connect the Masonic Order with the House of Stuart that we will have to investigate.

The theory was first advanced by an unknown writer in the *German Mercury*, a Masonic journal published about the close of the 18th century at Weimar, and edited by the celebrated Christopher Martin Wieland.¹

The writer in this article says that Dr. John Wilkins,² one of the most learned men of his time, and the brother-in-law of Oliver Cromwell, becoming discontented with the rule of Richard, Cromwell's son and successor, began to plan the means of reviving the royal authority. With this view he suggested the idea of organizing a society or club, in which, under the pretense of studying the sciences, the friends of the King might meet together with entire freedom. General George Monck, famous as military commander in Scotland and also as the admiral winning a victory over the Dutch, and several other army men, who had scarcely more learning than would enable them to write their names, were members. Their meetings always begun with a learned lecture, for the sake of form, but the conversation afterwards turned upon politics and the interests of the King. This politico-philosophical

¹ A German author, born 1733 near Biberach in Würtemberg. He published the first translation of Shakespeare issued in Germany and was equally famed for his poetry and prose. Professor of philosophy and literature, he later became tutor of Prince Charles Augustus at Weimar. Wieland died in 1813.

² English scientist born 1614 and bishop of Chester from 1668, married Robina Cromwell in 1656. Wrote upon history and philosophy, died 1672.

club, which later on assumed, after the Restoration, the title of the "Royal Society of Sciences," the writer in the *Mercury* asserts to have been the origin of the fraternity of Freemasons.

We have already had good reason to see, in the formation of Masonic theories, what little respect has been paid by their framers to the facts of history nor does the present hypothesis afford any exception to the general rule of rash claims and groundless guesses.

Christoph Friedrich Nicolai, a learned bookseller of Berlin, wrote and published, in 1783, an *Essay on the Accusations made against the Order of Knights Templar and their Mystery; with an Appendix on the Origin of the Fraternity of Freemasons*.¹

In this work he vigorously attacks the theory of the unknown writer in Wieland's *Mercury*, and the reasons on which he grounds his dissent are well chosen, but they do not cover the whole ground. Unfortunately, Nicolai had a theory of his own to foster, which also in a certain way connects Freemasonry with the real founders of the Royal Society, and his attack upon the hypothesis of Wieland's argument in its whole extent also weakens his own. Two negatives in most languages are usually held to be equal to affirming, but nowhere are two fictions to be united into a truth.

The arguments of Nicolai against the Wieland theory are, however, worth some mention, before we examine his own.

Nicolai says that Wilkins could scarcely have been discontented with the government of Richard Cromwell, since it was equally as much of an advantage to him as that of his father. He was (and he quotes Wood in the *Athenæ Oxonienses* as his authority) much opposed to the court, and was a zealous Puritan before the rebellion.

Wilkins, in 1648, was made the Master of Wadham College, in the place of a royalist who had been removed. After the beheading of Charles I. in 1649, he joined the republican party and took the oath of loyalty to the Commonwealth. He married the sister of Cromwell in 1656 and under Richard received the valuable position of Master of Trinity College, which, however, he lost upon the return to power of the monarchy in the following year.

¹ "Versuch über die Beschuldigungen, welche dem Tempelherrn Orden gemacht worden und über dessen Geheimniss; nebst einem Anhang über das Entstehen der Freimaurergesellschaft." Berlin and Stettin, 1783.

"Is it credible," says Nicolai, "that this man could have instituted a society for the purpose of advancing the restoration of the king; a society all of whose members were of the opposite party? The celebrated Dr. Goddard, who was one of the most distinguished members, was the physician and favorite of Cromwell, whom, after the death of the King, he attended in his campaigns in Ireland and Scotland. It is an extraordinary assertion that a discontent with the administration of Richard Cromwell should have given rise in 1658 to a society which was instituted in 1646. It is not less extraordinary that this society should have held its meetings in a tavern. It is very certain that in those days of somber Puritanism the few taverns to be found in London could not have been used as places of meeting for associations consisting of men of all conditions, as is now the custom. There would have been much imprudence in thus exposing secret deliberations on an affair equally dangerous and important to the inspection of all the spies who might be congregated in a tavern."

He asserts that the first meetings of the Society were held at the house of Dr. Goddard and of another member, and afterward at Cheapside and at Gresham College. These facts are proved by the records of the Society, as published by its historians.

As to the statement that Monck was one of the members of the Society—a fact that would be important in strengthening the theory that it was organized by the friends of the monarchy and with the design of advancing its restoration—Nicolai shows the impossibility that it could be correct. Monck was a prisoner in the Tower from 1644 until 1646, and after his release in that year spent only a month in London, not again visiting that city till 1659, when he returned at the head of an army. Then he was engaged in the arrangement of such delicate affairs and was so narrowly watched that it is not possible to be believed that with his well-known caution he would have taken part in any sort of political society whatever, while the Society would have acted very carelessly in admitting to its ranks military men who could scarcely write, and that too at a time when distrust had risen to its height.

But there is a better proof than any advanced by Nicolai, that Monck had nothing to do with the establishment of the

Royal Society, whatever may have been its object. His name does not appear upon the list of original or early members, taken from the official records and published by Dr. Thompson in his history of the Society.

Finally, Nicolai asserts truthfully that its later history has shown that this society was really engaged in scientific pursuits, and that politics was altogether banished from its discussions. He also contends, but with less accuracy, that the political principles of its members were opposed to the restoration of the monarchy, for which statement there is no positive authority.

Nicolai concludes that "There is no truth in the statements of the nameless writer in Wieland's *Mercury*, except that the restoration was opposed in secret by a certain society."

Therefore, he advances his own theory, no less unsound than the one he is opposing. Nicolai claims that this society "was the Freemasons, who had nothing in common with the other, except the date of foundation, and whose views in literature as well as in politics were of an entirely opposite character."

This was the theory of Nicolai — not that Freemasonry originated in the Royal Society, but that it was established by certain learned men who sought to advance the experimental philosophy which had just been introduced by Bacon. But the same idea was favored by the founders of the Royal Society, and as many of the supporters of this school were also among the first members of the Royal Society, it seems difficult to separate the two theories so as to make of each a distinct and independent existence. But it will be better to let the Berlin bookseller explain his doctrine in his own language, before an attempt is made to apply to it the usual tests of criticism.

He begins by asserting that one of the effects of the labors of Andrea¹ and the other Rosicrucians was the application of a wholesome criticism to the examination of philosophical and scientific subjects. Nicolai even thought that the *Fama Fraternitatis*, or the fame and confession of the Rosy Cross, the great work of Andrea, had first suggested to Bacon² the notion of his

¹ Johann Valentin Andrea, born 1586, died 1654, a German author long supposed to be the founder of the Rosicrucians, a secret society practicing symbolic rites and on which he wrote three books.

² Francis Bacon, born 1561, died 1626, lord chancellor of England and famous for his writings upon philosophy.

immortal work on *The Advancement of Learning*. At the same time in which Bacon flourished and taught his inductive philosophy, a method of discovering and proving general propositions, the Rosicrucians introduced a system of philosophy which was founded on the study of the action of nature.

Lord Bacon had treated these views in the above book *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, except that he rejected the Rosicrucian method of secret instruction. Everything that he taught was to be open and free. Therefore, as he had written his great work in the Latin language, for the use of the learned, he now composed his *New Atlantis* in English, that all classes might be able to read it.

This work contains his celebrated romance of the House of Solomon. Nicolai thinks this story of Bacon's may have had its influence in the origin of the society of Freemasons.

Bacon in this flight of imagination supposes that a vessel lands on an unknown island, called Bensalem, over which in days of yore a certain King Solomon reigned. This King had a large establishment, which was called the House of Solomon or the College of the Six Days' Work, in allusion to the six days of the account by Moses of the Creation. He afterwards describes the great equipment which was there employed in physical researches. There were deep grottoes and tall towers for matching the events of nature; artificial mineral waters; large buildings in which meteors, the wind, rain and thunder and lightning were imitated; extensive botanic gardens, and large fields in which all kinds of animals were collected for the study of their instincts and habits, and houses filled with all the wonders of nature and art. There were also a great number of learned men, to whom the direction of these things was intrusted. They made journeys into foreign countries, and prepared reports on what they saw. They wrote, they collected, they examined evidence and worked out results, and discussed together as to what was proper to be published.

This romance, says Nicolai, was in accord with the prevailing taste of the age. It did far more to spread the views of Bacon on the observation of nature than this great writer's more learned work had been able to do. The House of Solomon attracted the attention of everybody. King Charles I. was anxious to bring

about something like it, but was prevented by the Civil Wars. Nevertheless, this powerful idea, associated with that of the Rosicrucians, continued to agitate the minds of the progressive men of that period who now began to be convinced of the necessity of experimental knowledge.

Accordingly, in 1646, a society of learned men was established, all of whom were of Bacon's opinion that philosophy and the physical sciences should be placed within the reach of all thinking minds. They held meetings at which — believing that instruction in physics was to be sought by a general exchange of ideas — they made many scientific experiments in common. Among these men were John Wallis, John Wilkins, Jonathan Goddard, Samuel Foster, Francis Glisson, and many others, all of whom were, fourteen years afterward, the founders of the Royal Society.

Proceedings like these were not in accord with the mental condition of England at that period. A gloomy spirit had overshadowed religion, and a mystical theology, almost Gnostic¹ in its character, had infected the best minds. Devotion had passed into enthusiasm and that into bigotry, and bloody wars and revolutions were the result.

Then it was that such skillful users of men as Cromwell and Ireton took advantage of this weakness for the purpose of concealing and advancing their own designs.

The taint of this dark and sad character is met with in all the science, the philosophy, and even in the oratory and poetry of the period. Astrology and Theurgy or Magic were then in all their glory. Chemistry, which took the place of experimental science, was as obscure and dimly lighted a study as every other species of learning. Its facts were veiled in the allegories of the Alchemists and the Rosicrucians.

A few wise men, disheartened by this darkening of intellectual light, had organized a society in 1646. But as they were still burdened with a remnant of the popular prejudice, they were the friends of the esoteric or secret method of instruction. They did not believe that human knowledge should be freely taught so as

¹ A widespread spiritual movement of the first few centuries of the Christian era whose followers believed they had a secret knowledge of the mysteries of God distinct from that of Christianity. Their teaching was a mixture of Greek and the far Eastern philosophy. See the "Ante-Nicene Fathers," 1885, by Coxe, also "The Gnostics and Their Remains," 1887, by King.

to become within the reach of all. Thus their Society became a secret one. The first members of this Society were, says Nicolai, Elias Ashmole, the celebrated antiquary; William Lilly, a famous astrologer; Thomas Wharton, a physician; George Wharton; William Oughtred, a mathematician; Dr. John Hewitt, and Dr. John Pearson, both clergymen, and several others. The annual festival of the Astrologers gave rise to this association. It had previously held one meeting at Warrington, in Lancashire, but it was first firmly planted at London.

The object was to build the House of Solomon in a real sense, but the establishment was to remain as secret as the island of Bensalem in Bacon's *New Atlantis*. That is, they were to be engaged in the study of nature, but the instructions were to remain within the Society in an esoteric form; in other words, it was to be a secret affair.

Allegories were used by these philosophers to present their ideas. First were the ancient columns of Hermes, by which Jamblichus pretended that he had cleared up all the doubts of Porphyry.¹ You then mounted, by several steps, to a chequered floor divided into four regions, to denote the four superior sciences, after which came the types of the six days, which expressed the object of the Society. All of which was intended to teach the doctrines that God created the world and preserves it by fixed principles, and that he who seeks to know these principles, by an investigation of the interior of nature, comes the closer to God and obtains from His grace the power of controlling nature. This, says Nicolai, was the essence of the mystical and alchemical doctrine of the age, so that we may conclude that the Society which he has been describing was in reality an association of alchemists, or rather of astrologers.

Nicolai may have been indebted for these allegories to the alchemical writings of that period to which he refers. He may have drawn on his own imagination for them. We are uncertain which of these is the truth, as he cites no authorities. But in them we may plainly detect Masonic symbols, such as the pillars of the porch of the Temple, the mystical ladder of steps, and

¹ Chalcidenus Jamblichus, born 283, died 333, a popular teacher at Alexandria who wrote a *Life of Pythagoras*. He was a disciple of Porphyry or Porphyrius, born 233, died 306, a Greek philosopher and writer, noted for his violent attack upon the Christian beliefs.

the mosaic pavement. Thus it is that he seems to find a connection between Freemasonry and the secret Society that he has been describing.

He still further pursues the theory of their likeness by the following remarks:

"It is known that all who have the right of citizenship in London, whatever may be their rank or condition, must be recognized as members of some company or corporation. But it is always easy for a man of quality or of letters to gain admission into one of these companies. Now, several members of the society that has just been described were also members of the Company of Masons. This was the reason of their holding their meetings at Masons' Hall, in Masons' Alley, Basinghall Street. They all entered the company and assumed the name of *Free and Accepted Masons*, adopting, besides, all its external marks of distinction. *Free* is the title which every member of this body assumes in England; the right or franchise is called *Freedom*; the brethren call themselves *Freemen*; *Accepted* means, in this place, that this private society had been accepted or incorporated into that of the Masons. Thus it was that chance gave birth to that denomination of *Freemasons* which afterward became so famous, although it is possible that some allusion may also have been intended to the building of the House of Solomon, an allegory with which they were also familiar."

According to the theory of Nicolai, two famous associations, each of a character peculiar to itself, were at the same period indebted to the same cause for their existence. These were the Royal Society and the Freemasons. "Both," he says, "had the same object and the difference in their proceedings arose only from a difference in some of the opinions of their members. The one society had adopted as its maxim that the knowledge of nature and of natural science should be freely given to all classes of men, while the other contended that the secrets of nature should be restricted to a small number of chosen candidates. The former body, which was the Royal Society, therefore held open meetings; the latter, which was the Society of Freemasons, enveloped its transactions in mystery."

"In those days," says Nicolai, "the Freemasons were altogether devoted to the King and opposed to the Parliament, and

they soon occupied themselves at their meetings in devising the means of sustaining the royal cause. After the death of Charles I., in 1649, the Royalists becoming still more closely united. Fearing to be known as such, they joined the assemblies of the Freemasons for the purpose of concealing their own identity, and the good intentions of that society being well known, many persons of rank were admitted into it.

"But as the objects which occupied their attention were no other than to diminish the number of the partisans of Parliament, and to prepare the way for the restoration of Charles II. to the throne, it would have been very imprudent to communicate to all Freemasons, without exception, the measures which they deemed it expedient to take, and which required an inviolable secrecy.

"Accordingly they adopted the method of selecting a certain number of their members, who met in secret, and this committee, which had nothing at all to do with the House of Solomon, selected allegories, which had no relation to the former ones, but which were very appropriate to their design. These new Masons took Death for their symbol. They lamented the death of their master, Charles I.; they nursed the hope of vengeance on his murderers. They sought to re-establish the *Word*, or his son, Charles II., for they applied to him the word *Logos*, which, in its theological sense, means both the *Word* and the *Son*; and the Queen, Henrietta Maria, the relict of Charles I., being thenceforth the head of the party, they designated themselves the *Widow's Sons*.

"They agreed also upon private signs and modes of recognition, by which the friends of the royal cause might be able to distinguish each other from their enemies. This precaution was of great utility to those who traveled, and especially to those of them who retired with the court to Holland, where, being surrounded by the spies of the Commonwealth, it was necessary to be exceedingly diligent in guarding their secret."

Nicolai then proceeds to show how, after the death of Oliver Cromwell and the retiring of his son Richard, the control of public affairs fell into the hands of the chiefs of various parties, whence resulted confusion and dissensions, which tended to render the cause of the monarchy still more popular. Most of the military

leaders were, however, still opposed to any notion of a restoration. The hopes of the Royalists centered upon General Monck, who commanded the army in Scotland, and who, it was known, had begun to look favorably on propositions which he had received in 1659 from the exiled King.

Then it became necessary to bind together their secret committee still more closely, that they might treat of Scottish affairs in reference to the interests of the King. They selected new allegories which symbolized the critical state to which they were reduced, and such virtues as prudence, concord, and courage, which were necessary to success. They adopted a new device and a new sign, "and in their meetings spoke allegorically of taking care, in that wavering and uncertain condition of falling, lest the arms should be broken."

Probably, in this last and peculiar sentence, Nicolai refers to some of the changes in the High Degrees, made about the middle of the 18th century, but whose invention, like most Masonic historians of his day, he sets down as of an earlier date.

In regard to what he says about *falling and the broken arm*, we find Nicolai afterwards quoting a small dictionary which he says appeared about the beginning of the 18th century, and in which we meet with the following definition:

"*Mason's Wound*, — An imaginary wound above the elbow, to represent a fracture of the arm occasioned by a fall from an elevated place."

"This," says Nicolai, "is the authentic history of the origin of the Society of Freemasons, and of the first changes that it underwent, changes which transformed it from an esoteric society of natural philosophers into an association of good patriots and loyal subjects. Hence it was that it subsequently took the name of the Royal Art as applied to Masonry."

He concludes by affirming that the Society of Freemasons continued to assemble after the Restoration, in 1660, and even made, in 1663, several regulations for its preservation. But the zeal of its members was abated by the changes which science and manners underwent during the reign of Charles II. Its political character ceased with the coming of the King, and its secret method of teaching the natural sciences must have been greatly upset if not indeed completely altered.

The Royal Society, whose method had been exoteric and open, and from whose meetings politics were shut out, although its members were in principle opposed to the Restoration, had a more successful progress. It was joined by many of the Freemasons, the most prominent of whom was Elias Ashmole, who, Nicolai says, changed his opinions and became a member of the Royal Society.

To prevent its weakness or even its death, the Society of Freemasons planned several changes in its constitution so as to give it a specific design. This was undertaken and the symbols of the Society were changed so as to put the Temple of Solomon in the place of Bacon's House of Solomon, as a more likely allegory to show the nature of the new institution. Nicolai suggests that the building of St. Paul's Church and the persecutions endured by Sir Christopher Wren may have had something to do with the selection of these new symbols. But on this point he does not insist.

Such is the theory of Nicolai. Rejecting the idea that the origin of the Order of Freemasonry is to be traced to the founders of the Royal Society, he claims to have found it in a society of philosophers who met about that time at Masons' Hall, in Basinghall Street. These assumed the name of Free and Accepted Masons. They claimed, in opposition to the views of the members of the Royal Society, that all sciences should be taught secretly, and therefore held their meetings in private. Their real object being to nourish a political conspiracy for the advancement of the cause of the monarchy and the restoration of the exiled King.

Nicolai does not expressly mention the Astrologers. But it is very evident that he refers to them as the so-called philosophers who started this secret society. To them, therefore, he credits the invention of the Masonic system, as it now exists, after the necessary changes which the Society's own policy and the trials and troubles of the times had brought about.

Nicholas de Bonneville,¹ the author of the essay entitled *The Jesuits Chased Out of Freemasonry*, had a similar opinion.

¹ A French writer, born 1760, died 1828, he published his "Les Jesuits Chassés de la Maçonnerie" in 1788 and also wrote other works, one being a comparison of Scottish (Ecosse) Masonry with the three grades of the Templars.

He says that in 1646 a society of Rosicrucians was formed at London, modeled on the ideas of the *New Atlantis* of Bacon. It assembled in Masons' Hall, where Ashmole and other Rosicrucians made changes in the method of initiation of the Operative Freemasons, which had consisted only of a few ceremonies used by craftsmen, and substituted a mode of initiation founded in part on the mysteries of ancient Egypt and Greece. They then worked out the first degree of Freemasonry as we now have it, and, to distinguish themselves from common masons, called themselves Freemasons. Thory cites this without comment in his *Acta Latomorum*, and gives it as a part of the reliable records of the Order.

But ingenious and likely as are these views, both of Nicolai and Bonneville, they unfortunately can not withstand the real acid test of all truth, the proofs of authentic history.

It will be seen that we have two hypotheses to investigate — first that advanced by the contributor to Wieland's *Mercury*, that the Society of Freemasons was brought into being by the founders of the Royal Society, and that maintained by Nicolai and Bonneville, that it owes its invention to the Astrologers who were living in the same period with these founders. Both of these theories place the date of the invention in the same year, 1646, and give London as the place of the invention.

We must first direct our attention to the theory which maintains that the Royal Society was the beginning of Freemasonry, and that the founders of that academy were the organizers of the Society of Freemasons.

This theory, first advanced, apparently, by the nameless contributor to Wieland's *Mercury*, was exploded by Nicolai, in the arguments heretofore quoted, but something may be added to increase the strength of what he has said.

We have the straightforward testimony of all the historians of that institution that it was not at all connected with the political contests of the day, and that it was founded only as a means of pursuing philosophical and scientific inquiries.

Dr. Thompson, who takes his information from the early records of the Society, says that "it was established for the express purpose of advancing experimental philosophy, and that its foundation was laid during the time of the Civil Wars and was

owing to the accidental association of several learned men who took no part in the disturbances which agitated Great Britain."¹

He adds that "About the year 1645 several ingenious men who resided in London and were interested in the progress of mathematics and natural philosophy agreed to meet once a week to discourse upon subjects connected with these sciences. These meetings were suspended after the resignation of Richard Cromwell, but revived in 1660, upon the Restoration."²

They met at first in private rooms, but afterwards in Gresham College and then in Arundel House. Their earliest code of laws shows that their discussions were not in secret, but open to properly introduced visitors, as they still continue to be.

Weld, the librarian of the Society, says that to it "attaches the renown of having from its foundation applied itself with untiring zeal and energy to the great objects of its institution."³ He states that, although the Society was not chartered until 1660, "there is no doubt that a society of learned men were in the habit of assembling together to discuss scientific subjects for many years previous to that time."⁴

Spratt, in his history of the Society, says that in the gloomy season of the Civil Wars they had selected natural philosophy as their private means of amusement, and that at their meetings "they chiefly attended to some particular trials in Chymistry or Mechanics."

The testimony of Robert Boyle, Wallis, and Evelyn, students of science living in the same period as that of the founders, is to the same effect, that the Society was simply philosophical in its character and without any political design.

Dr. Wallis, who was one of the original founders, makes this statement concerning the origin and objects of the Society in his *Account of Some Passages in My Own Life*:⁵

¹ "History of the Royal Society," by Thomas Thompson, M.D., F.R.S., LL.D. London, 1812, p. 1.

² See the above "History of the Royal Society," p. 1.

³ "A History of the Royal Society," with Memoirs of its Presidents, by Charles Richard Weld, Esq., 2 vols., London, 1848, I, 27.

⁴ See the above "History of the Royal Society," by Charles Richard Weld.

⁵ In Hearne's edition of Langsteeff's Chronicle.

"About the year 1645, while I lived in London (at a time when, by our civil wars, academical studies were much interrupted in both our Universities), besides the conversation of divers eminent divines, as to matters theological, I had the opportunity of being acquainted with divers worthy persons inquisitive into natural philosophy and other parts of human learning, and particularly what has been called the *New Philosophy* or *Experimental Philosophy*. We did, by agreements, divers of us meet weekly in London on a certain day to treat and discourse of such affairs."

Wallis says that the subjects pursued by them related to physics, astronomy, and natural philosophy, such as the circulation of the blood, the Copernican system of the heavenly bodies, the Torricellian experiment on the pressure of the air, etc.

All these authentic accounts of the object of the Society show there is not the slightest allusion to it as a secret organization. Nor is there any mention of a form of initiation, but only a reception by the unanimous vote of the members. Reception, as laid down in the by-laws, consisted merely in the president taking the newly-elected candidate by the hand and saluting him as a member or fellow of the Society.

There is the further fact that at that period many similar societies had been instituted in various countries of Europe, such as the Academia del Corriento at Florence and the Academy of Sciences at Paris, whose members, like those of the Royal Society of London, devoted themselves to the study of science.

This encouragement of scientific pursuits may be principally credited to many circumstances that followed the revival of learning; the coming of Greeks into Western Europe, trained with Grecian literature; Bacon's new system of philosophy, which alone was enough to awaken the intellects of all thoughtful men; and the labors of Galileo and his disciples in the study of natural forces. All these had prepared many minds for the pursuit of philosophy by experimental and inductive methods, which took the place of the unscientific dogmas of preceding ages.

Through such influences as these, wholly unconnected with any religious or political aspirations, that the founders of the Royal Society were induced to hold their meetings and to earnestly follow up for the public good their philosophical labors without

the restraints of secrecy. These efforts came to a successful issue, 1660, in the incorporation of an institution of learned men which at this day holds the most honored and the leading place among the scientific societies of the world.

But it is in vain to look in this Society, either in the mode of its organization, in the character of its members, or in the nature of their pursuits, for any connection with Freemasonry, an institution entirely different in its construction and its objects. The theory, therefore, that Freemasonry is indebted for its origin to the Royal Society of London must be rejected as wholly without proofs or even likelihood.

Of course the reader will carefully note that the two societies have much in common. For many generations a very proper pursuit in the studies of every Freemason has been impressed upon him in his necessary attention to the liberal arts and sciences. Equally was this the purpose of the organizers of the Royal Society. Therefore we may expect to find, and we do find such to be the case, that members, and leading members, too, of the one body were active in the other. Like objects brought about companionship. But this does not imply that either of the two societies were used for any but loyal and studious objects.

But the theory of Nicolai, which credits the origin of Freemasonry to another society of about the same period, whose members were evidently Astrologers, is somewhat more likely, although equally incorrect. Its consideration must, however, be taken up as the subject of another chapter.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

THE ASTROLOGERS AND THE FREEMASONS



WE have seen, in the preceding chapter, that Nicolai had sought to trace the origin of Freemasonry to a society organized in 1646 by a group of philosophers who were living in the same period with, but entirely distinct from, those who founded the Royal Society. Though he does not in so many words state the fact, yet, from the names of the persons to whom he refers, there can be no doubt that he meant the Astrologers, who at that time were very popular in England.

Judicial astrology, or the forecasting or divination of the future by the study of the stars, was, of all the convictions to which the uncritical beliefs and superstitions of the Middle Ages gave birth, the most popular. This source of inquiry prevailed over all Europe. Practiced by the most learned, the findings of its professors were sought with keen relish and believed with confidence by the most wealthy and the most powerful. Astrologers often formed a part of the household of princes who followed their counsels in the most important matters relating to the future. Men and women of every rank sought these teachers that they might have their nativities cast, their fortunes told, and secure the aid of their occult or magic art in the recovery of stolen goods or the foretelling of happy marriages or of successful journeys.

Astrology, meaning the science of the stars, was called the Mother of Astronomy. The scholars who devoted themselves to the study of the heavenly bodies for the aims and objects of pure science were often called upon to use their knowledge of the planets for the purpose of making prophecies. Kepler, the greatest astronomer of that age, was compelled against his will to cater to the popular beliefs, that he might thus gain a livelihood and

be enabled to pursue his nobler studies. In one of his works he complains that the scanty reward of an astronomer would not provide him with bread, if men did not entertain hopes of reading the future in the heavens. Thus he trifled with the science that he loved and adorned, and made predictions for inquisitive consulters, although, at the same time, he declared to his friends that "they were nothing but worthless conjecture."

Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa,¹ though he practiced alchemy, a pursuit that bore the same relation to chemistry that astrology does to astronomy, when ordered by his patroness, the Queen Mother of France, to take up the use of the latter subject, astrology, expressed his dislike to the task. Of the Astrologers he said, in his great work on the *Uncertainty and Vanity of the Sciences*, "these fortune tellers do find entertainment among princes and magistrates, from whom they receive large salaries; but, indeed, there is no class of men who are more pernicious to a commonwealth. For, as their skill lies in the adaptation of ambiguous predictions to events after they have happened, so it happens that a man who lives by falsehood shall by one accidental truth obtain more credit than he will lose by a hundred manifest errors."

The 16th and 17th centuries were the golden age of astrology in England. We know all that is needed of this subject and of the character of its professors from the story of his own life as told by William Lilly, himself an English astrologer of no mean note. Perhaps, indeed, Lilly was the best-educated and the most honest of those who took up the practice of astrology in England in the 17th century. He is one of those to whom Nicolai says is due the forming of that secret society, in 1646, which invented Freemasonry.

We must remember that Nicolai tells us that of the society of learned men who founded Freemasonry, the first members were Elias Ashmole, the skillful seeker after information upon old objects, who was also a student of astrology; William Lilly, a famous astrologer; George Wharton, likewise an astrologer; William Oughtred, a mathematician, and some others. He also asserts that the annual festival of the Astrologers gave rise to this association. "It had previously held," says Nicolai, "one

¹ A German writer, soldier and physician, born 1486, died 1535. His two chief works are the "De Incertitudine et Vanitate Scientiarum" and "De Occulta Philosophia."

meeting at Warrington, in Lancashire, but it was first firmly established at London."

Their meetings, the same writer claims, were held at Masons' Hall, in Masons' Alley, Basinghall Street. Many of them were members of the Masons' Company, and probably they all entered it and assumed the title of Free and Accepted Masons, adopting, besides, all its outward marks of place and rank.

Such is the theory which makes the Astrologers, joining themselves with the Operative Freemasons, who met at their Hall in Basinghall Street, the founders of the Speculative Order of Free and Accepted Masons as they exist at the present day.

It is surprising that in a question of history a man of letters of the standing of Nicolai should have freely used such bold guesses and in claims so wholly barren of authority. Unfortunately, it is thus that Masonic history has often been written.

We shall try to separate the truth from the fiction in this account. The task will be a laborious one, for, as Goethe¹ has well said in one of his maxims, "It is much easier to perceive error than to find truth. The former lies on the surface, so that it is easily reached; the latter lies in the depth, which it is not every man's business to search."

The group of Astrologers, to whose meeting in the Masons' Hall is said to be due the origin of the Freemasons, were not a class of persons who would have been likely to have united in such an attempt, which showed at least a desire for some intellectual progress. The record we have of them is convincing. Lilly, perhaps the best-educated and the most honest of these persons, has in the story of his life, written as he says on the title page by his own hand, given us some notion of the character of many of them who lived in London when he practiced the art in that city.²

Of Evans, who was his first teacher, he tells us that he was a clergyman of Staffordshire, whence he "had been in a manner enforced to fly for some offences very scandalous committed by him"; of another astrologer, Alexander Hart, he says "he was

¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, famous German author and Freemason, born 1749, died 1832, initiated 1780 in the Amalia Lodge at Weimar. See references to Freemasonry in his "Wilhelm Meister," and in his poetry.

² "The Life of William Lilly, Student in Astrology, wrote by himself in the 66th year of his Age, at Hersham, in the Parish of Walton upon Thames, in the County of Surrey."

but a cheat." Jeffrey Neve he calls a smatterer; William Poole was a frequenter of taverns with "lewd people," and fled on one occasion from London because suspected of being a party to theft; John Booker, though honest, was ignorant of his profession; William Hodges dealt with angels, but "his life answered not in holiness and sanctity to what it should," for he was given to swearing; and John à Windsor had immoral habits.

Men of such conditions of life were not likely to interest themselves in the advance of science or in the starting of a society of speculative philosophers. It is true that these persons lived at an earlier period than that credited by Nicolai to the organization of the Society in Masons' Hall, but in the few years that elapsed it is not probable that the disciples of astrology had much improved in their moral or intellectual condition.

We do have some knowledge of certain of the men named by Nicolai as having organized the Society of Freemasons in 1646. Elias Ashmole, the celebrated student and collector of the remains of ancient times, and founder of the Ashmolean Museum in the University of Oxford, is an historical character. He wrote his own life, in the form of a most minutely detailed diary, extending from July 2, 1633, to October 9, 1687. This book, in which he sets down the most trivial as well as the most important events of his life — recording even the cutting of his wisdom teeth, or the taking of a drug to give him a sweat — does not make the slightest reference to the transaction referred to by Nicolai. The silence of so babbling a storyteller as to such an important event is itself sufficient proof that it did not occur. What Ashmole did really say in his diary about Freemasonry will be presently seen.

Lilly, another supposed actor in this affair, the starting of the Society of Freemasons, also wrote up his own life with great minuteness. His complete silence on the subject is equally suggestive. Nicolai says that the persons that Lilly mentions were either already members of the Company of Masons or at once became so. Now, Lilly was a member of the Salters' Company, one of the twelve great livery companies of London, and surely he would not have left it to join a minor company, such as that of the Masons.

Oughtred could not have been united with Ashmole in organizing a society in 1646, for the latter, in a note to Lilly's life, traces

his acquaintance with him to the residence of both as neighbors in Surrey. Now, Ashmole did not remove to Surrey until the year 1675, twenty-nine years after his supposed meeting with Oughtred at the Masons' Hall. Probably, too, this is not the mathematician and inventor whose death is usually credited to the year 1630.

Between Wharton and Lilly, who were rival almanac-makers, there was, in 1646, a bitter soreness of feeling, which was not healed until years afterward. In an almanac which Wharton published in 1645 he called Lilly "an impudent, senseless fellow, and by name William Lilly." It is not likely that they would have been engaged in the fraternal task of organizing a great society at that very time.

Dr. John Pearson, another one of the supposed founders, is celebrated in literary and theological history as the author of an *Exposition of the Creed*. He was born in 1613, died 1686. Of a man so prominent as to have been the Master of Jesus College, and then of Trinity College, Cambridge, afterwards Bishop of Chester, Ashmole makes no mention in his diary. If he had ever met him or had been engaged with him in so important an affair, this silence in so minute a journal of the transactions of his everyday life would be beyond all explanation.

Enough has been said to show the improbability of any such meeting as Nicolai records. Even Ashmole and Lilly, the two leaders, were unknown to each other until the close of the year 1646. Ashmole says in his diary of that year: "Mr. Jonas Moore brought and acquainted me with Mr. William Lilly: it was on a Friday night, and I think on the 20th Nov. (1646)."

That there was an association, or a club or society, of Astrologers about that time in London is very probable. Pepys, in his *Memoirs*, says that in October, 1660, he went to Mr. Lilly's, "there being a club that night among his friends." There he met Esquire Ashmole and went home accompanied by Mr. Booker, who, he says, "did tell me a great many fooleries, which may be done by nativities, and blaming Mr. Lilly for writing to please his friends, and not according to the rules of art, by which he could not well erre as he had done." The club, we may well suppose, was that of the Astrologers, held at the house of the chief member of the profession. That it was not a secret society we

conclude from the fact that Pepys, who was no astrologer, was permitted to be present.

We know also from Ashmole's diary that the Astrologers held an annual feast, generally in August, sometimes in March, July, or November, but never on a Masonic festival. Ashmole regularly attended it from 1649 to 1658, when it was suspended, but afterwards revived, in 1682. In 1650 he was elected a steward for the following year. He mentions the place of meeting only three times, twice at Painters' Hall, which was probably the usual place, and once at the Three Cranes, in Chancery Lane. Had the Astrologers and the Masons Company been connected, Masons' Hall, in Basinghall Street, would certainly have been the place for holding their feast.

Nicolai also goes on to say that the object of this secret society which organized the Freemasons was to advance the restoration of the King. But Lilly had made, in 1645, the year before the meeting, this declaration: "Before that time, I was more Cavalier than Round-head, but after that I engaged body and soul in the cause of Parliament." He still expressed, it is true, his attachment to monarchy; but his life during the Commonwealth showed his devotion to Cromwell, of whom he was a particular favorite. After the Restoration he had to seek a pardon, which was obtained by the influence of his friends, but this would hardly have been necessary if he had been engaged in forming a secret society the object of which was to restore Charles II. to the throne.

However, Charles I. was not beheaded until 1649, so that a society could not have been organized in 1646 for the restoration of his son. But it may be said in reply that the Restoration alluded to was of the monarchy, which at that time was for all practical purposes at an end. So this objection may pass without further comment.

The fact is that the whole of this fiction of the organization, in 1646, of a secret society by a set of philosophers or astrologers, or both, which resulted in the establishment of Freemasonry, arose out of a misunderstanding or a misrepresentation — whether willful or not, we will not say — of two passages in the diary of Elias Ashmole. Of these two passages, and they are the only ones in his minutely detailed diary of fifty-four years in which there is any mention of Freemasonry, the first is as follows:

"1646, Octob. 16. 4 *Hor.* 30 minutes *post merid.* I was made a Free-Mason at Warrington in Lancashire, with Colonel Henry Mainwarring of Karticham in Cheshire; the names of those that were then at the lodge, Mr. Richard Penket Warden, Mr. James Collier, Mr. Richard Sankey, Henry Littler, John Ellam, and Hugh Brewer."

And then, after an interval of thirty-five years, during which there is no further allusion to Freemasonry, we find the following memorandum:

"1682, Mar. 10. About 5 p. m. I received a summons to appear at a lodge to be held the next day at Masons Hall, London.

"11. Accordingly I went, and about noon were admitted into the fellowship of Free-Masons. Sir William Wilson Knight, Captain Richard Borthwick, Mr. William Wodman, Mr. William Grey, Mr. Samuel Taylour, and Mr. William Wise."

Without the slightest show of reason or scrap of authority, Nicolai changes the mention of the Lodge at Warrington, in which Ashmole was made a Freemason, into an annual feast of the Astrologers. The Society of Astrologers, he says, "had previously held one meeting at Warrington, in Lancashire, but it was first firmly established at London." He gives as his authority for this statement the very passage from Ashmole's diary in which that worthy person records his initiation in a Masonic Lodge.

These events in the life of Ashmole, which connect him with the Masonic fraternity, have given considerable embarrassment to students of the Craft who have been unable to understand the two apparently conflicting statements that he was made a Freemason at Warrington in 1646 and afterward received into the fellowship of the Freemasons, in 1682, at London.

In the time when Bro. Mackey wrote his History the difficulty was all the greater because then the extract from Ashmole's diary had the misleading word "by" inserted so that the paragraph read "According I went, and about noon was admitted into the fellowship of Free-Masons by Sir William Wilson Knight," etc.

Misunderstanding also arises from the fact that we have unfortunately no satisfactory records of the meetings of the Operative Lodges of England in the 17th century, and little or

nothing but traditional and generally mythical accounts of their practices during that period.

The sister kingdom of Scotland has been more fortunate in this respect, and the valuable work of Brother Lyon, on the *History of the Lodge of Edinburgh*, has supplied us with authentic records of the Scottish Lodges at a much earlier date. These records will furnish us with some information in respect to the English Lodges in existence about that time. We have every reason to suppose that these bodies were governed by rules and followed customs not very different from those of the Lodges in the nearby kingdom.

Bro. Lyon has on this subject the following remarks, which may be quoted to advantage on the present occasion:

"The earliest date at which non-professionals are known to have been received into an English Lodge is 1646. The evidence of this is derived from the diary of one of the persons so admitted, but the preceding minutes¹ afford authentic instances of Speculative Masons having been admitted to the fellowship of the Lodge of Edinburgh twelve years prior to the reception of Colonel Mainwarring and Elias Ashmole in the Lodge of Warrington and thirty-eight years before the date at which the presence of Gentleman Masons is first discernible in the Lodge of Kilwinning by the election of Lord Cassillis to the deaconship.

"It is worthy of remark that, with singularly few exceptions, the non-operatives who were admitted to Masonic fellowship in the Lodges of Edinburgh and Kilwinning, during the 17th century, were persons of quality, the most distinguished of whom, as the natural result of its metropolitan position, being made in the former Lodge. Their admission to fellowship in an institution composed of Operative Masons associated together for purposes of their Craft would in all probability originate in a desire to elevate its position and increase its influence, and once adopted, the system would further recommend itself to the Fraternity by the opportunities which it presented for cultivating the friendship and enjoying the society of gentlemen to whom in ordinary circumstances there was little chance of their ever being personally known.

"On the other hand, non-professionals connecting themselves with the Lodge by the ties of membership would, we believe, be

¹ Minutes of the Lodge of Cannongate, Kilwinning, for 1635, quoted by him on a preceding page.

actuated partly by a disposition to reciprocate the feelings that had prompted the bestowal of the fellowship partly by curiosity to penetrate the arcana of the Craft, and partly by the novelty of the situation as members of a secret society and participants in its ceremonies and festivities. But whatever may have been the motives which animated the parties on either side, the tie which united them was a purely honorary one."¹

What is here said by Lyon of the Scottish Lodges may be, in our judgment, with equal force applied to those of England at the same period. There was in 1646 a Lodge of Freemasons at Warrington, just as there was one at Edinburgh. Into this Lodge Colonel Mainwarring and Elias Ashmole, both non-professional gentlemen, were admitted as members, or, to use the language of the latter, were "made Freemasons," a technical term that has been preserved and is freely used even to the present day.

We must not assume that the Lodge at Warrington even at that early date was merely operative though this seems to have been a common conclusion. Bro. W. H. Rylands has demonstrated (and Bros. Conder and Hughan agree with him) that it was a speculative assembly.² Hughan also holds that so far from Ashmole being made an honorary member, it is quite clear that he was admitted to the full privileges enjoyed by the brethren who elected him.

But thirty-five years afterward, being then a resident of London, Ashmole was summoned to attend a meeting of the Company of Masons, to be held at their hall in Masons' Alley, Basinghall Street, and there, according to the frequently mentioned account, *he* was "admitted into the fellowship of Freemasons." How are we to explain this apparent double or renewed admission? Mark the difference of language. In 1646 he was "made a Freemason." In 1682 he was "admitted into the fellowship of Freemasons." The distinction is often said to be an important one. There is an easy explanation.

Let us here set down in the very words and style of the diary the entries made by Ashmole. The importance to us of this

¹ Lyon, "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," p. 81.

² See the article "Freemasonry in the 17th Century," in the "Masonic Magazine," London, December, 1881.

extract deserves that it be presented in the most plain and detailed manner:

"March 1682.

"10: About 5 p. m. I recd a summons to appr. at a Lodge to be held the next day, at Masons Hall London.

"11. Accordingly I went, & about noone were admitted into the Fellowship of Free Masons.

"Sr. William Wilson Knight, Capt. Rich: Boothwick, Mr. Will: Woodman, Mr. Wm. Grey, Mr. Samuell Taylour & Mr. William Wise.

"I was the Senior Fellow among them (it being 35 yeares since I was admitted). There were psent beside myselfe the Fellowes after named:

"Mr. Tho: Wise Mr. of the Masons Company this psent yeare. Mr. Thomas Shorthose, Mr. Thomas Shadbolt, . . . Waindsford Esqr. Mr. Rich: Young Mr. John Shorthose, Mr. William Hamon, Mr. John Thompson, & Mr. Will: Stanton. Wee all dyned at the halfe Moone Taverne in Cheapeside, at a Noble Dinner prepaired at the charge of the New-accepted Masons."

The above shows clearly that Ashmole does not claim to have been made a Freemason on March 11, 1682. He tells us plainly that 35 years previously he was admitted to membership. The new members of the above record are evidently Sir William Wilson Knight and his associates, Boothwick (or Borthwick, according to Bro. Edward Conder's copy), Woodman, Grey, Taylour and Wise. Of those present we find from Bro. Conder's *Hole Craft and Fellowship of Masons*, page 204, that Thomas Wise was in 1682 Master of the Masons Company of London, John Shorthose and William Stanton were the Wardens, and that in all thirteen members of the party were members of the Masons Company. Bro. Conder also says, page 204, "The others (meaning Sir William Wilson Knight, and Capt. Rich: Boothwick) were doubtless members of the Masons Hall Lodge of Freemasons, where the old speculative part of Masonry had been kept secretly alive during the troubled state of the country since the Reformation."

The Masons' Company in 1682 was at London one of those many city companies which embraced the various trades and

handicrafts of the metropolis. Stowe, in his *Survey of London*,¹ says that "The Company of Masons, otherwise termed Freemasons, were a society of ancient standing and good reckoning, by means of affable and kind meetings divers times, and as a loving brotherhood should use to do, did frequent their mutual assemblies in the time of King Henry IV., in the 12th year of his most gracious reign." The 12th year, by the way, would be 1411.

Bro. Edward Conder, in his book *The Hole Craft and Fellowship of Masons*, page 53, says by way of comment on the extract from Stowe's *Survey*, that "This statement is correct only so far as showing that the company was in being at that date, and we must not fall into the error that has been so often made, that the company was *founded* at that time; indeed, the evidence that is to be found in the Corporation Records at Guildhall prove very clearly that in 1375 the Masons Company existed and was represented on the court of Common Council; and it is also recorded that as early as 1356, rules for the guidance of the masons of London were passed before the Mayor, Aldermen and Sheriffs of London."

In R. Chiswell's *New View of London*, printed in 1708, it is said that the Masons' Company "were incorporated about the year 1410,² having been called the Free Masons, a Fraternity of great account, who have been honored by several Kings, and very many of the Nobility and Gentry being of their Society. They are governed by a Master, 2 Wardens, 25 Assistants, and there are 65 on the Livery."

W. Maitland, in his *London and its Environs*, 1761, says, speaking of the Masons: "This company had their arms granted by Clarencieux, King-at-Arms, in the year 1472, though the members were not incorporated by letters patent till they obtained them from King Charles II. in 1677. They have a small convenient hall in Masons Alley, Basinghall Street."

There were then, in the time of Ashmole, two distinct bodies of men practicing the Craft of Operative Freemasonry, namely, the Lodges which were to be found in various parts of the country, and the Company of Masons, whose seat was at London.

¹ See the edition of 1633, page 630.

² Probably a mistake as we find the charter was granted 1677. See following paragraph.

Into one of the Lodges, at Warrington, in Lancashire, Ashmole had in 1646 received membership, which, in the technical language of that and of the present day, he called being "made a Freemason." But this did not make him a member of the Masons' Company of London, for this was a distinct society with exclusive rules and regulations, and admission could only be obtained by the consent of the members. There were many Freemasons who were not members of the Company. Ashmole it would appear was a guest.

We may draw the following conclusions: First, that in 1646, at the very date assigned by Nicolai for the organization of the Freemasons as a secret political society, under the leadership of Ashmole and Lilly, the former, being as yet unacquainted with the latter, was at Warrington, in Lancashire, where he found a Lodge of Freemasons already organized and with its proper officers and its members, by whom he was initiated into the Craft. Secondly, that while in London he was a guest, being already a Freemason, of the fellowship of the Masons' Company. Thirdly, that he was also a member of the fraternity of Astrologers, having been admitted probably in 1649, and regularly attended their annual feast from that year to 1658, when the festival, and perhaps the fraternity, was suspended until 1682, when it was again revived.

During all this time it is evident from the notes of Ashmole that the Freemasons and the Astrologers were two distinct bodies. Lilly, who was the head of the Astrologers, was probably, not a Freemason, or the care with which he has written his life story, would not have permitted him to omit what to his peculiar frame of mind would have been so important a circumstance as connecting him still more closely with his admired friend, Elias Ashmole. Neither would the latter have neglected to record it in his diary, written with even greater minuteness than Lilly's memoirs.

Notwithstanding the clear historical testimony that Lodges of Freemasons had been organized long before the time of Ashmole, and that he actually was made a Freemason in one of them, many writers, Masonic and profane, have maintained that Ashmole was the founder of the Craft.

Thus Chambers, in their *Encyclopædia*, say that "Masonry was founded by Ashmole and some of his literary friends," and De Quincey expressed the same opinion.

Bro. John Yarker, in his very readable *Notes on the Scientific and Religious Mysteries of Antiquity*, offers another view. He refers to the meeting of the chemical adepts at Masons' Hall (of which we have no evidence), and then to the "Feast of the Astrologers" attended by Ashmole. He follows Nicolai in asserting that their allegories were founded on Bacon's House of Solomon, and says that they used as emblems the sun, moon, square, triangle, etc. He concludes, "It is possible that Ashmole may have consolidated the customs of the two associations, but there is *no evidence* that any Lodge of this, his speculative rite, came under the Masonic Constitution."¹

Of course it is possible that Ashmole may have invented a speculative rite of some kind, but there is *no evidence* that he did so. Many things are possible that are not probable, and many probable that are not actual.

Ashmole himself had a very different and much more correct notion of the origin of Freemasonry than those who have striven to claim him as its founder.

Dr. Knipe, of Christ Church, Oxford, in a letter to the publisher of Ashmole's Life, says: "What from Mr. E. Ashmole's collections I could gather was, that the report of our society's taking rise from a bull granted by the Pope in the reign of Henry III., to some Italian architects to travel over all Europe, to erect chapels, was ill-founded. Such a bull there was, and these architects were Masons; but this bull, in the opinion of the learned Mr. Ashmole, was confirmative only, and did not, by any means, create our Fraternity, or even establish them in this kingdom."

Ashmole could not have been the founder of Freemasonry in London in 1646, since he himself expressed the belief that the institution had existed in England before the 13th century.

There is no doubt that he was intimately connected with the Astrologers. Dr. Krause, in his *Three Oldest Documents of the Masonic Brotherhood*,² quotes from Lilly's *History of my Life and Times*.

"The King's affairs being now grown desperate, Mr. Ashmole withdrew himself, after the surrender of the Garrison of Worcester, into Cheshire, where he continued till the end of Octo-

¹ "Notes on the Scientific and Religious Mysteries of Antiquity," p. 106.

² "Die drei ältesten Kunsturkunden der Freimaurerbrüderschaft," IV, 286.

ber, and then came up to London, where he became acquainted with Master, afterwards Sir Jonas Moore, Mr. William Lilly, and Mr. John Booker, esteemed the greatest astrologers in the world, by whom he was caressed, instructed and received into their fraternity, which then made a very considerable figure, as appeared by the great resort of persons of distinction to their annual feast, of which Mr. Ashmole was afterwards elected Steward."

Ashmole left Worcester for Cheshire July 24, 1646, and removed from Cheshire to London, October 25, of the same year. In that interval of three months he was made a Freemason, at Warrington. At that time he was not acquainted with Lilly, Moore, or Booker.

This destroys the accuracy of Nicolai's assertion that the meeting held at Masons' Hall, in 1682, by Ashmole, Lilly, and other astrologers, when they founded the Society of Freemasons, was preceded by a similar one, in 1646, at Warrington.

A few words must now be said upon Bacon's House of Solomon, where Nicolai and others supposed to have first given rise to a Masonic allegory afterward changed to that of the Temple of Solomon.

Bacon, in his unfinished romance of the *New Atlantis*, invented the fable of an island of Bensalem, where there was an institution called the House of Solomon, the fellows being students of philosophy and investigators of science. He thus described their occupations:

"We have twelve that sail into foreign countries, who bring in the books and patterns of experiments of all other parts; these we call merchants of light. We have three that collect the experiments that are in all books; these are called depredators. We have three that collect experiments of all mechanical arts, and also of liberal sciences, and also of practices which are not brought into the arts; these we call mystery men. We have three that try new experiments such as themselves think good; these we call pioneers or miners. We have three that draw the experiments of the former four into titles and tablets to give the better light for the drawing of observations and axioms out of them; these we call compilers. We have three that bind themselves looking into the experiments of their fellows and cast about how

to draw out of them things of use and practice for man's life and knowledge as well for works as for plain demonstrations and the easy and clear discovering of the virtues and parts of bodies; these we call doing men and benefactors. Then after divers meetings and consults of our whole number to consider of the former labors and collections, we have three to take care out of them to direct new experiments of higher light, more penetrating into nature than the former; these we call lamps. We have three others that do execute the experiments so directed and report them; these we call inoculators. Lastly we have three that raise the former discoveries by experiments into greater observations, axioms and aphorisms; these we call interpreters of nature."¹

From this list of the labors of the inmates of the House of Solomon it could not in the least degree have been made the foundation of a Masonic allegory. In fact, the suggestion of a Masonic connection could have been taken only from a confused idea of the relation of the House to the Temple of Solomon, a mistake that a reading of the *New Atlantis* would readily remove.

As Plato had written his *Republic* and Sir Thomas More his *Utopia* to give their ideas of a model commonwealth, so Lord Bacon commenced his *New Atlantis* to set forth his idea of a model college for the study of nature by experimental methods. These views were first introduced in his *Advancement of Human Learning*, and would have been perfected in his *New Atlantis* had he ever completed it.

The new philosophy of Bacon produced a great change in the minds of thinking men. That group of philosophers who in the 17th century, as Dr. Whewell says, "began to knock at the door where truth was to be found," would very wisely seek the key in the inductive and experimental method taught by Bacon.

To the learned men, therefore, who first met at the house of Dr. Goddard and the other members, and whose meetings led up to the formation of the Royal Society, the allegory of the House of Solomon very probably furnished valuable hints for the pursuit of their studies.

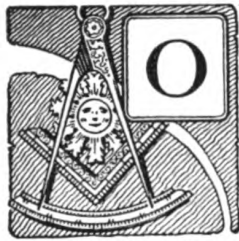
To Freemasons in any age the allegory would have been useless, and could by no ingenious method have been twisted into a foundation for their symbolic science. The claim that it was

¹ "New Atlantis," Works, vol. ii, p. 376.

adopted in 1646 by the founders of Freemasonry as a fitting allegory for their secret system of instruction is evidently out of the question. We agree with Bro. W. J. Hugan that the theory crediting the foundation of Freemasonry to Elias Ashmole and his friends the Astrologers "is opposed to existing documents dating before and since his initiation." Equally is it opposed to the whole current of authentic history, and is unsupported by the character of the institution and the nature of its symbolism.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

THE ROSICRUCIANS AND THE FREEMASONS



IF all the theories advanced in relation to the origin of Freemasonry from some one of the secret sects or societies, either of antiquity or of the Middle Ages, there is none more interesting than that which seeks to connect it with the Hermetic philosophy.¹ This happens to be the case because there is none which presents more attractively probable claims for our favorable attention.

No doubt in some of what are called the High Degrees there is a very evident use of a Hermetic element. This can not be denied. The fact will be most apparent to anyone who examines their rituals. Some by their very titles, where the Hermetic language and a reference to Hermetic principles are adopted, plainly admit the connection and the influence.

There is, therefore, no necessity to investigate the question whether or not some of those High or Philosophic Degrees which were invented about the middle of the 18th century are or are not of a Hermetic character. The time of their invention, when Craft Freemasonry was already in a fixed condition, takes them entirely out of the problem relating to the origin of the Masonic institution. No matter when Freemasonry was founded, the High Degrees were an afterthought, and might very well be affected by the principles of any philosophy in use at the period of their invention.

¹ The word "Hermetic" is taken from Hermes Trismegistus, the Greek name for Thoth, the Egyptian god of intelligence, of magic, science, and invention, the teacher of writing and calculation. The Hermetic books consisted originally of 42 treatises on religion, art, science, geometry, astronomy, medicine, rites and ceremonies, hymns, laws, nature of the gods, etc. Of these but fragments survive. Founded upon Egyptian mythology, neither the author or authors nor the time when first written can now be ascertained.

It is a question of some interest to the Masonic student whether at the time of the so-called Revival of Freemasonry, in the early part of the 18th century, certain Hermetic degrees did not exist which sought to connect themselves with the system of Masonry. The question is of still greater interest whether this attempt was successful so far, at least, as to impress upon the features of that early Freemasonry a portion of the features of the Hermetic philosophy, some of the marks of which may still remain in our modern system.

The Hermetic philosophy was that invented and taught by the Rosicrucians, and before we can attempt to resolve these important and interesting questions, it will be necessary to take a brief glance at the history and the character of Rosicrucianism. On the 17th of August, 1586, Johann Valentin Andrea was born at Herrenberg, a small market-town of what was afterward the kingdom of Würtemberg. After a studious youth, during which he became possessed of a more than moderate share of learning, he left in 1610 on a pilgrimage through Germany, Austria, Italy, and France, supplied with but little money, but with a lively desire for the gain of knowledge. Returning home, in 1614, he adopted the church as a profession and was appointed a deacon in the town of Vaihingen, and reached, in 1634, the positions of Protestant prelate of the Abbey of Bebenhausen and religious adviser of the Duchy of Brunswick. He died on the 27th of June, 1654, at the ripe age of sixty-eight years.

To the moral character of Andrea his biographers have given great praise. A lover of mankind from his earliest life, he carried, or sought to carry, his plans of goodwill into action. Wherever, says Thomas Vaughan,¹ the church, the school, the institute of charity have fallen into ruin or distress, there the tireless Andrea sought to restore them. He was, says another writer, the guardian genius and the comforter of the suffering; he was a practical helper as well as a theoretical adviser; in the times of dearth and famine, many thousand poor were fed and clothed by his exertions, and the town of Kalw, of which, in 1720, he was appointed the superintendent, long enjoyed the

¹ Thomas Vaughan, or Eugenius Philalethes, for he had several names in his wanderings, is believed to have been a Welshman and born in 1612. A number of Rosicrucian books are credited to him but even his publishers seem to be uncertain of the authorship. Whether this was done to excite curiosity in the matter is now an open question.

benefit of many charitable institutions which owed their origin to his efforts.¹

A man having such benevolent feelings and actuated by such a spirit of philanthropy would view with deep regret the faults of the times in which he lived, and would search for some plan by which the condition of his fellow-men might be amended and the dry, weak theology of the church be converted into some more living, active, humanizing system.

To gain this purpose he could see no better method than the founding of a practical brotherhood, one of a kind that did not at that time exist, but the formation of which here solved to suggest to such noble minds as might be awakened to favor the enterprise.

With this view Andrea used the help of fiction. Hence there appeared, in 1615, a work which he entitled the *Report of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood*, or, in its original Latin, *Fama Fraternitatis Rosæ Crucis*. An edition had been published the year before with the title of *Universal Reformation of the Whole Wide World, with a Report of the Worshipful Order of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, addressed to all the Learned Men and Nobility of Europe*.² There was another work, published in 1616, with the title of *Chemische Hochzeit*, or *Chemical Marriage*, by Christian Rosencreutz.

All of these books were published without any author's name, but they were believed to be due to the pen of Andrea. They were all intended for one purpose, that of showing by the character of their reception who were the true lovers of wisdom and brotherly love, and of inducing them to come forward to the perfection of the enterprise, by changing this fiction of a society into a real and active organization.

The romantic story of Christian Rosencreutz, the supposed founder of the Order, is thus told by Andrea. We are indebted for the most part to the language of George Sloane,³ who, although his views on the subject contain many errors, has yet given us a very good account in brief of the myth of Andrea.

¹ Biographical Sketch by Wm. Bell, in *Freemasons' Quarterly Magazine*, London, vol. ii., N. S., 1854, p. 27.

² "Allgemeine und General Reformation der Ganzen Weiten Welt. Beneben der Fama Fraternitatis des Löblichen Ordens des Rosencreutzes, an alle Gelehrte und Häupter Europæ geschrieben," Cassel, 1614.

³ "New Curiosities of Literature," vol. ii, p. 44.

According to Andrea's tale, a certain Christian Rosencreutz, though of good birth, found himself compelled from poverty to enter a house of monks at a very early period of life. He was only sixteen years old when one of the monks planned to go as a pilgrim to the Holy Sepulcher, and Rosencreutz, as a special favor, was permitted to go with him. At Cyprus the monk is taken ill, but Rosencreutz goes on to Damascus with the intention of going to Jerusalem. While resting in the former city from the toil of his journey, he hears of the wonders performed by the wise men of Damascus. His curiosity being excited, he places himself under their direction.

Three years having been spent in getting an understanding of their most hidden mysteries, he sets sail from the Gulf of Arabia for Egypt. There he studies the nature of plants and animals and then he goes, in obedience to the instructions of his Arabian masters, to Fez, in Morocco. At this city it was the custom of the Arabian and African philosophers to meet annually for the purpose of giving to each other the results of their experience and inquiries. Here he passed two years in study. He then crossed over to Spain, but not meeting there with a favorable reception, he returned to his native country.

Germany was then filled with mystics of all kinds. The ideas of Rosencreutz for a reformation in morals and science met with so little sympathy from the public that he resolves to establish a society of his own.

With this view he selects three of his favorite companions from his old convent. To them, under a solemn vow of secrecy, he gives the knowledge he had gained during his travels. He puts upon them the duty of placing it in writing and of forming a magical set of words for the benefit of future students.

In addition to this task they also planned and actually tried to treat freely all the sick who should ask their help. But in a short time the flock of patients became so great as seriously to interfere with their other duties. A building which Rosencreutz had been erecting, called the Temple of the Holy Ghost, was now completed, he decided to increase the number of the brotherhood, and accordingly he initiated four new members.

When all is completed, and the eight brethren are instructed in the mysteries of the Order, they separate, according to agree-

ment, two only staying with Father Christian. The other six, after traveling for a year, are to return and give up to the brethren the results of their experience. The two who had stayed at home are then to be relieved by two of the travelers, so that the founder may never be alone, and the six again divide and travel for a year.

The laws of the Order as they had been laid down by Rosencreutz were as follows:

1. That they should devote themselves to nothing else than that of the free practice of physic.

2. That they were not to wear any special clothing, but were to follow in this respect the customs of the country where they might happen to be.

3. That each one was to present himself on a certain day in the year at the Temple of the Holy Ghost, or send an excuse for his absence.

4. That each one was to look out for a brother to succeed him in the event of his death.

5. That the letters R. C. were to be their seal, watchword, and title.

6. That the brotherhood was to be kept a secret for one hundred years.

When one hundred years old, Christian Rosencreutz died. The place of his burial was unknown to any one but the two brothers who were with him at the time of his death. They carried the secret with them to their own graves.

However, the Society continued to exist unknown to the world, always consisting of eight members only, until another hundred and twenty years had gone by, when, according to a tradition of the Order, the grave of Father Rosencreutz was to be discovered, and the brotherhood to be no longer a mystery to the world.

About this time the brethren began to make some alterations in their building. They thought of removing to another and more fitting situation the memorial tablet, on which were inscribed the names of their associates. The plate, which was of brass, was affixed to the wall by means of a nail in its center. So firmly was it fastened that in tearing it away a portion of the plaster of the wall broke off and showed what had been a hidden door. Upon this door being still further freed from the plastering, there

appeared above it in large letters the following words: *POST CENTUM VIGINTI ANNOS PATEBO — After one hundred and twenty years I will be opened.*

Although the brethren were greatly delighted at the find, they so far controlled their curiosity as not to open the door until the next morning, when they found themselves in a vault of seven sides, each side five feet wide and eight feet high. This room was lighted by an artificial sun in the center of the arched roof, while in the middle of the floor, instead of a tomb, stood a round altar covered with a small brass plate, on which was this inscription:

A. C. R. C. *Hoc, universi compendium, vivus mihi sepulchrum feci — i.e.,* While living, I made this compact copy of the universe my grave.

About the outer edge was:

Jesus mihi omnia — i.e., Jesus is everything to me.

In the center were four figures, each enclosed in a circle, with these words inscribed around them:

1. *Nequaquam vacuus.*
2. *Legis Jugum.*
3. *Libertas Evangelii.*
4. *Dei gloria intacta.*

That is — 1. By no means void. 2. The yoke of the Law. 3. The liberty of the Gospel. 4. The unsullied Glory of God.

On seeing all this, the brethren knelt down and returned thanks to God for having made them so much wiser than the rest of the world. Then they divided the vault into three parts, the roof, the wall, and the pavement. The first and the last were divided into seven triangles, corresponding to the seven sides of the wall, each of which formed the base of a triangle, while the apices met in the center of the roof and of the pavement. Each side was divided into ten squares, containing figures and sentences to be explained to the new initiates. In each side there was also a door opening upon a closet, wherein were stored up many rare articles, such as the secret books of the Order, the word book of Paracelsus,¹ and other things of a similar nature. In one of the closets they discovered the life of their founder; in others they found curious mirrors, burning lamps, and a variety of objects intended to aid

¹ Or to use his real name, Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, born 1493, died 1541, a Swiss physician and a lecturer at Basel University.

in rebuilding the Order, which, after the passing of many centuries, was to fall into decay.

Pushing aside the altar, they came upon a strong brass plate. This being removed, they beheld the corpse of Rosencreutz as freshly preserved as on the day when it had been placed there, and under his arm a volume of vellum with letters of gold, containing, among other things, the names of the eight brethren who had founded the Order.

Such is an outline of the story of Christian Rosencreutz and his Rosicrucian Order as it is told in the *Fama Fraternitatis*. It is very evident that Andrea composed this romance — for it is nothing else — not to record the existence of any actual society, but only that it might serve as a suggestion to the learned and the kind-hearted to engage in the establishment of some such benevolent association. “He hoped,” says Vaughan, “that the few nobler minds whom he desired to organize would see through the veil of fiction in which he had invested his proposal; that he might communicate personally with some such, if they should appear, or that his book might lead them to form among themselves a practical philanthropy answering to the serious purpose he had used in his fiction.”¹

His design was misunderstood then, as it has been since. Everywhere his fable was accepted as a fact. Search was made by the believers in the story for the discovery of the Temple of the Holy Ghost. Printed letters appeared continually, addressed to the unknown brotherhood, seeking admission into the fraternity — a fraternity that existed only in the pages of the *Fama*. The silence in reply to so many applications awoke the suspicions of some, while the mystery strengthened the belief of others. The brotherhood, whose actual house “lay beneath the Doctor’s hat of Valentin Andrea,” was earnestly attacked and as vigorously defended in the many books and pamphlets which during that period poured from the German press.

Learned men among the Germans did not give a favoring ear to the philanthropic suggestions of Andrea. But the mystical notions contained in his story were seized eagerly by the quacks, who added to them the dreams of the alchemists and the visions of the astrologers, so that the Rosicrucianism that then followed

¹ “Hours with the Mystics,” vol. ii, p. 103.

became a very different thing from that which had been planned by its author. However, it does not appear that the Rosicrucians, as an organized society, made any stand in Germany. Descartes¹ says that after strict search he could not find a single lodge in that country. But it extended, as we will presently see, into England, and there became known as a mystical association.

Strange opinions, either willful or mistaken, have existed in respect to the relations of Andrea to Rosicrucianism. We have no more right or reason to ascribe the starting of such a sect to the German theologian than we have to credit the finding of the republic of Utopia to Sir Thomas More, or of the island of Bensalem to Lord Bacon. In each of these instances a fiction was invented on which the author might build his philosophical or political thoughts. There was no idea that readers would take that for fact which was merely meant for fiction.

Yet Righellini de Schio, in his *Masonry Considered as the Result of the Egyptian, Jewish, and Christian Religions*, refuses to express an opinion on the allegorical question, as if there might be a doubt on the subject, respects the legend as it was given in the *Fama*, and asserts that on the return of Rosencreutz to Germany "He instituted secret societies with an initiation that resembled that of the early Christians."² He dates back the *Chemical Wedding* of Andrea a century and a half, credits the authorship of that work to Christian Rosencreutz, as if he were a real person, and thinks that he founded, in 1459, the Rite of the Theosophists, the earliest branch of the Rose Croix, or the Rosicrucians; for the French make no distinction in the two words, though in history they are different. History written in this way is worse than fable — it is an *ignis fatuus*, a will of the wisp, which can only lead astray. But this is the method by which Masonic history has too often been treated.

Nicolai, although the means by which he connects Freemasonry with Rosicrucianism are wholly unsound, is yet, in his treatment of the latter, more honest or less ignorant. He adopts the correct view when he says that the *Fama Fraternitatis* only

¹ René Descartes, born 1596, died 1650, a French scientist, sometimes called "the father of modern philosophy."

² "La Maçonnerie considérée comme le resultat des Religions Egyptienne, Juive et Chrétienne," T. iii, p. 108.

announced a general reformation and exhorted all wise men to unite in a proposed society for the purpose of removing error and restoring wisdom. He praises it as a charming vision, full of poesy and imagination, but very fanciful as was indeed common in the writings of that age. He notes the fact that while the Alchemists have sought in that work for the secrets of their mysteries, it really makes fun in a solemn style of satire on their claims.

The *Fama Fraternitatis* undoubtedly appealed to the curiosity of the Mystics, who abounded in Germany at the time of its appearance, of whom not the least important were the Alchemists. These, having sought vainly for the invisible society of the Rosicrucians, as it had been described in the romance of Andrea, resolved to form such a society for themselves. But, to the sorrow of the author of the *Fama*, they neglected or postponed the moral reformation which he sought, and put in its place dreamy schemes of the Alchemists, a body of thinkers who put their origin as students of nature and seekers of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of immortality to a very remote period.¹

We may trace the origin of the Rosicrucians, not to Valentin Andrea, nor to Christian Rosencreutz, who was perhaps only the invention of his brain, but to the influence exerted by him upon certain Mystics and Alchemists. These, whether they accepted the legend of Rosencreutz as a fiction or as a verity, at least made free use of it in the building up of their society.

Therefore, we are not inclined to doubt the statement of L. C. Orvius, as cited by Nicolai, that in 1622 there was a society of Alchemists at the Hague, who called themselves Rosicrucians and claimed Rosencreutz as their founder.

Michael Maier,² the physician of the Emperor Rudolf II., devoted himself in the early part of the 17th century to the pursuits of alchemy, and, having adopted the mystical views of the Rosicrucians, is said to have introduced that society into England. Maier was the author of many works in Latin in defense

¹ The Alchemists were the pioneers of modern chemistry. Believing that all substances were of one material element they searched for a means, the philosopher's stone, to change at will the base metals to gold, and for a liquid, or elixir, to delay the coming of death. See Bro. A. E. Waite's "Lives of the Alchemists."

² Maier was born 1568, died 1622, a tireless and self-sacrificing student of Rosicrucianism, Kloss mentioning seven of his works on this subject.

and in explanation of the Rosicrucian system. Among them was an epistle addressed "To all lovers of true chemistry throughout Germany, and especially to that Order which has hitherto lain concealed, but is now probably made known by the Report of the Fraternity (*Fama Fraternitatis*) and their admirable Confession."¹ In this work he uses the following language:

"What is contained in the 'Fama' and 'confessio' is true. It is a very childish objection that the brotherhood have promised so much and performed so little. The Masters of the Order hold out the Rose as a remote reward, but they impose the Cross on all who are entering. Like the Pythagoreans and the Egyptians, the Rosicrucians extract vows of silence and secrecy. Ignorant men have treated the whole as a fiction; but this has arisen from the probation of five years to which they subject even well qualified novices, before they are admitted to the higher mysteries, and within that period they are taught how to govern their own tongues!"

Although Maier died in 1622, it appears that he lived long enough to take part in the organization of the Rosicrucian sect, which had been formed out of the suggestions of Andrea. His views on this subject were, however, peculiar and different from those of most of the new disciples. He denied that the Order took either its origin or its name from the person called Rosencreutz. He says that the founder of the society, having given his disciples the letters R. C. as a sign of their fraternity, they improperly made out of them the words *Rose* and *Cross*. But these radical opinions were not accepted by the Rosicrucians in general, who still adhered to Andrea's legend as the source and the explanation of their order.

At one time Maier went to England, where he became intimately acquainted with Dr. Robert Fludd, the most famous as well as the earliest of the English Rosicrucians.

Robert Fludd was a physician of London, who was born in 1574 and died in 1637. He was a keen student of alchemy, theosophy, and every other branch of mysticism. He wrote in defense of Rosicrucianism, of which sect he was an active member. Among his earliest works is one published in 1616 under the title of *A Com-*

¹ "Omnibus veræ chymie Amantibus per Germaniam, et precipere illi Ordini adhuc delitescenti, at *Fama Fraternitatis* et *Confessione* suâ admiranda et probabile manifestato."

pendious Apology clearing the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross from the stains of suspicion and infamy cast upon them.

There has been some dispute as to whether Maier brought the system of Rosicrucianism to Fludd or whether Fludd had already received it from Germany before the visit of Maier. The only authority for the former statement is Thomas de Quincey (a most unreliable one), and the date of Fludd's *Apology* is against it.

Fludd's explanation of the name of the sect differs from that of both Andrea and Maier. It is, he says, to be taken in a figurative sense, and refers to the cross rose-red with the blood of Christ. Here he comes closely to the idea held by members of the modern Rose Croix degree.

No matter who was the missionary that brought it, it is very certain that Rosicrucianism was carried from Germany, its birth-place, into England at a very early period of the 17th century, and it is equally certain that after its introduction it flourished with more vigor than in its native soil.

That there were in that century, and even in the beginning of the next one, mystical initiations wholly unconnected with Freemasonry, but openly professing a Hermetic or Rosicrucian character and origin, may very readily be supposed from existing documents. It is a misfortune that such authors as Buhle, Nicolai, Righellini, with others, to say nothing of such non-masonic writers as Sloane and De Quincey, who were necessarily mere outsiders in all Masonic studies, should have mixed up the two institutions, and, because both were mystical, and one appeared to follow (although it really did not) the other in point of time, should have set forth the theory (wholly unsound) that Freemasonry owes its origin to Rosicrucianism.

The writings of Lilly and Ashmole, both learned men for the age in which they lived, prove the existence of a mystical philosophy in England in the 17th century, in which each of them took an active part. The Astrologers, who were deeply impressed with the Hermetic philosophy, held their social meetings for mutual instruction and their annual feasts. Ashmole gives hints of his initiation into what we may suppose to have been alchemical or Rosicrucian wisdom.

We have clear documentary testimony of the existence of a Hermetic degree or system at the beginning of the 18th century,

and about the time of what is called the Revival of Masonry in England, by the establishment of the Grand Lodge at London, and which, from other undoubted testimony, we know was not Masonic. This evidence is found in a rare work, some portions of whose contents, in reference to this subject, are well worthy of a careful review.

In the year 1722 there was published in London a work in small octavo bearing the following title:

"Long Livers: A curious History of such Persons of both Sexes who have liv'd several Ages and grown Young again: With the rare Secret of Rejuvenescency of Arnoldus de Villa Nova. And a great many approv'd and invaluable Rules to prolong Life: Also how to prepare the Universal Medicine. Most humbly dedicated to the Grand Master, Masters, Wardens, and Brethren of the Most Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of the FREE MASONS of Great Britain and Ireland. By Eugenius Philalethes, F.R.S., Author of the Treatise of the Plague. *Viri Fratres audite me.* Act. xv. 13. *Diligite Fraternitatem time Deum honorate Regem.* I. Pet. ii. 17. LONDON. Printed for J. Holland, at the Bible and Ball, in St. Paul's Church Yard, and L. Stokoe, at Charing Cross, 1722." pp. 64-199.

Eugenius Philalethes was the pen name of Thomas Vaughan, a celebrated Rosicrucian of the 17th century, who published, in 1652, a translation of the *Fama Fraternitatis* into English. But, as he was born in 1612, it is not to be supposed that he wrote the present work. However, it is not very important to identify this second Philalethes though there is not lacking proof that it was Robert Samber. Sufficient for our purpose is it to know that it is a Hermetic treatise written by a Rosicrucian, of which the title alone — the references to the renewal of youth, one of the Rosicrucian secrets, to the recipe of the great Rosicrucian Villa Nova, or Arnold de Villaneuve, and to the Universal Medicine, the Rosicrucian Elixir Vitæ — would be good proof. The only matter of interest in connection with the present subject is that this Hermetic work, written, or at least printed, in 1722, one year before the publication of the first edition of Anderson's *Constitutions*, refers plainly to the existence of a higher initiation than that of the Craft degrees, which the author seeks to put into the Masonic system.

This is evident by the dedication, which is addressed to "the Grand Master, Masters, Wardens, and Brethren of the Most Ancient and Most Honourable Fraternity of the Free Masons of Great Britain and Ireland."

The important fact, in this dedication, is that the writer refers in language that can not be mistaken, to a certain higher degree, or to a more exalted initiation, to which the degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry were an introduction. Thus he says, addressing the Freemasons:

"I present you with the following sheets, as belonging more properly to you than any else. But what I here say, those of you who are not far illuminated, who stand in the outward place and are not worthy to look behind the veil, may find no disagreeable or unprofitable entertainment; and those who are so happy as to have greater light, will discover under these shadows, somewhat truly great and noble and worthy the serious attention of a genius the most elevated and sublime — the spiritual, celestial cube, the only true, solid, and immovable basis and foundation of all knowledge, peace, and happiness." (Page iv.)

Another extract will show that the writer was not only thoroughly acquainted with the religious, philosophical, and symbolic character of the institution, but that he wrote evidently under the impression (perhaps we should say the knowledge) that at that day others besides himself had sought to connect Freemasonry with Rosicrucianism. He says:

"Remember that you are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and the fire of the universe. Ye are living stones, built up a spiritual house, who believe and rely on the chief *Lapis Angularis*, which the refractory and disobedient builders disallowed; you are called from darkness to light; you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood."

Here the symbolism is Masonic, but it is also Rosicrucian. The Freemasons had taken their symbol of the *STONE* from the metaphor of the Apostle, and like him had given it a spiritual meaning. The Rosicrucians had also the *Stone* as their most important symbol. "Now," says one of them, "in this discourse will I manifest to thee the natural condition of the Stone of the Philosophers, apparelled with a triple garment, even this Stone of Riches and Charity, the Stone of Relief from Languishment —

in which is contained every secret; being a Divine Mystery and Gift of God, than which there is nothing more sublime.”¹

Naturally, a Rosicrucian, in addressing Freemasons, would refer to a symbol common to both, though each got its meaning through a different channel.

In another passage he refers to the seven liberal arts, of which he calls Astronomy “the grandest and most sublime.” This was the Rosicrucian doctrine. In that of the Freemasons the leading place is given to Geometry. Here we find a difference between the two institutions which proves their separate and independent existence. Still more important differences will be found in the following passages, which, while they suggest a higher degree, show that it was a Hermetic one, which, however, the Rosicrucian writer was willing to graft onto Freemasonry. He says:

“And now, my Brethren, *you of the higher class* (note that he does not call it a degree), permit me a few words, since you are but few; and these few words I shall speak to you in riddles, because to you it is given to know those mysteries which are hidden from the unworthy.

“Have you not seen then, my dearest Brethren, that stupendous bath, filled with the most limpid water, than which no purity can be purer, of such admirable mechanism, that makes even the greatest philosopher gaze with wonder and astonishment, and is the subject of the contemplation of the wisest men. Its form is a quadrate sublimely placed on six others, blazing all with celestial jewels, each angularly supported with four lions. Here repose our mighty King and Queen (I speak foolishly, I am not worthy to be of you), the King shining in his glorious apparel of transparent, incorruptible gold, beset with living sapphires; he is fair and ruddy, and feeds among the lilies; his eyes, two carbuncles, the most brilliant, darting prolific never-dying fires; and his large, flowing hair, blacker than the deepest black or plumage of the long-lived crow; his royal consort vested in tissue of immortal silver, watered with emeralds, pearl and coral. O mystical union! O admirable commerce!

“Cast now your eyes to the basis of this celestial structure, and you will discover just before it a large basin of porphyrian

¹ Dialogue of Arislaus in the “Alchemist’s Enchiridion,” 1672. Quoted by Hitchcock in his “Alchemy and the Alchemists,” p. 39.

marble, receiving from the mouth of a large lion's head, to which two bodies displayed on each side of it are conjoined, a greenish fountain of liquid jasper. Ponder this well and consider. Haunt no more the woods and forests (I speak as a fool); haunt no more the fleet; let the flying eagle fly unobserved; busy yourselves no longer with the dancing idiot, swollen toads, and his own tail-devouring dragon; leave these as elements to your *Tyrones*.

"The object of your wishes and desires (some of you may, perhaps, have attained it, I speak as a fool), is that admirable thing which has a substance, neither too fiery nor altogether earthy, nor simply watery; neither a quality the most acute or most obtuse, but of a middle nature, and light to the touch, and in some manner soft, at least not hard, not having asperity, but even in some sort sweet to the taste, odorous to the smell, grateful to the sight, agreeable and delectable to the hearing, and pleasant to the thought; in short, that only one thing besides which there is no other, and yet everywhere possible to be found, the blessed and most sacred subject of the square of wise men, that is . . . (I had almost blabbed it out and been sacrilegiously perjured. I shall therefore speak of it with a circumlocution yet more dark and obscure, that none but the Sons of Science and those who are illuminated with the sublimest mysteries and profoundest secrets of MASONRY may understand.) . . . It is then what brings you, my dearest Brethren, to the pellucid, diaphanous palace of the true disinterested lovers of wisdom, that triumphant pyramid of purple salt, more sparkling and radiant than the finest Orient ruby, in the center of which reposes inaccessible light epitomized, that incorruptible celestial fire, blazing like burning crystal, and brighter than the sun in his full meridian glories, which is that immortal, eternal, never-dying PYROPUS; the King of genius, whence proceeds everything that is great and wise and happy.

"These things are deeply hidden from common view, and covered with pavilions of thickest darkness, that what is sacred may not be given to dogs or your pearls cast before swine, lest they trample them under foot, and turn again and rend you."

All this is Rosicrucian thought and language. Its counterpart may be found in the writings of any of the Hermetic philosophers. But it is not Freemasonry and could be understood by no

Freemason relying for his guide only on the teaching he had received in his own Order. It is the language of a Rosicrucian student or adept addressed to others of his kind, who like himself had united with the Fraternity of Freemasons, that they might out of its select circle choose the most mystical and therefore the most suitable candidates and to elevate them to the higher mysteries of their own brotherhood.

That Philalethes and his brother Rosicrucians had an opinion of the true character of Speculative Freemasonry very different from that taught by its founders is evident from other passages of this Dedication. Unlike Anderson, Desaguliers, and the writers purely Masonic who succeeded them, the author of the Dedication establishes no connection between Architecture and Freemasonry. Indeed it is somewhat singular that although he names both David and Solomon in the course of his address, it is with little respect, especially for the latter, and he does not refer, even by a single word, to the Temple of Jerusalem. The Freemasonry of this writer is not architectural, but altogether theosophic. Clearly, as a Hermetic philosopher, he sought to identify the Freemasons with the disciples of the Rosicrucian sect rather than with the Operative Freemasons of the Middle Ages. This is a point of much interest in the discussion of the question of a connection between the two associations, considering that this work was published only five years after the revival. The book suggests, not that Freemasonry was established by the Rosicrucians, but, on the contrary, that at that early period the latter were seeking to link themselves to the former. That while they were willing to use the simple degrees of Craft Freemasonry as a foundation for the building of their own fraternity, they looked upon them only as the means of securing a higher initiation, altogether unmasonic in its character and to which but few Freemasons ever attained.

Neither Anderson nor Desaguliers, our best (because they are of that very period) authority for the state of Freemasonry in the beginning of the 18th century, give the slightest indication that there was in their day a higher Freemasonry than that described in the *Book of Constitutions* of 1723. The Hermetic element, such as is represented by the specimen already submitted above, was evidently not introduced into Speculative Freemasonry until

later in the 18th century; even then it appears in a fragmentary way in some high degrees, made by certain of the Continental manufacturers of Rites.

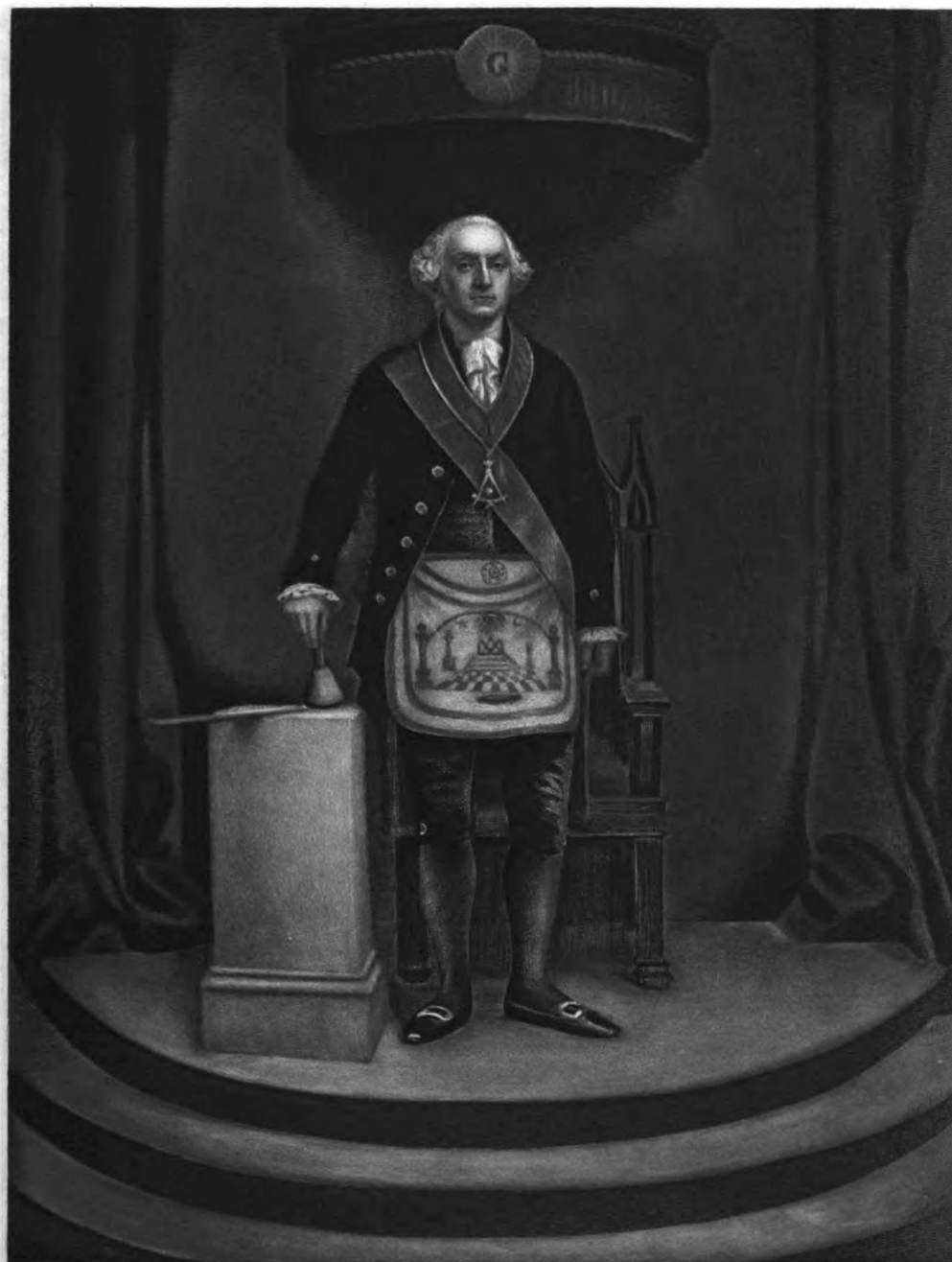
If, as Eugenius Philalethes plainly means, there were in the year 1721 higher degrees, or at least a higher degree, attached to the Masonic system and claimed to be a part of it, which possessed mystical knowledge hidden from the great body of the Craft, "who were not far illuminated, who stood in the outward place and were not worthy to look behind the veil" — by which we are clearly told that there was another class of initiates *who were far illuminated, who stood within the inner place and looked behind the veil* — then the question forces itself upon us, why is it that neither Anderson nor Desaguliers nor any of the writers of that period, nor any of the rituals mention this higher and more enlightened system?

The answer is readily at hand. It is because no such system of initiation, so far as Freemasonry was concerned, existed. The Master's degree was at that day the end and perfection of Speculative Freemasonry. There was nothing above or beyond it. The Rosicrucians, who, especially in their astrological branch, were then in full force in England, had, as we see from this book, their own initiation into their Hermetic and theosophic system. Freemasonry then beginning to become popular and being also a mystical society, these brethren of the Rosy Cross were ready to enter within its gates and to take advantage of its organization. They soon sought to discriminate between their own perfect wisdom and the imperfect knowledge of their brother Freemasons, and Rosicrucian-like, spoke of secrets they only possessed. There were Rosicrucians who, like Philalethes, became Freemasons, and Freemasons, like Elias Ashmole, who became Rosicrucians.

But there was no birth of one from the other. The two systems are not even akin — their origin is different; their symbols, though sometimes the same in appearance, are not always if ever the same in meaning; and we can not trace the one historically from the other.

Yet there have been students whose judgment on other matters has been good, who have not hesitated to trace Freemasonry to a Rosicrucian source. Some of these, as Buhle, De Quincey, and Sloane, were not Freemasons, and we can fairly credit their

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historical errors to their want of knowledge, but Nicolai and Righellini have no such excuse.

Johann Gottlieb Buhle, born 1763, died 1821, was among the first to claim that Freemasonry was an offshoot of Rosicrucianism. This he did in a work entitled *On the Origin and the Principal Events of the Orders of Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry*,¹ published in 1804. His theory was that Freemasonry was invented in the year 1629, by John Valentin Andrea, and that it sprang out of the Rosicrucian system or fiction set forth by that writer. His errors met with many denials at the time, besides those of Nicolai, in the work already mentioned. Even De Quincey himself, a foe of Freemasonry, and who translated, or rather rewrote the views of Buhle, does not hesitate to call him illogical in reasoning and confused in style.

Nicolai and De Quincey have almost the same theory, though that of the former is modified in its conclusions.

The self-esteem of De Quincey, with his complete ignorance of the true elements of the Masonic institution, hardly entitle his arguments to serious criticism. His theory may be explained briefly as follows:

He thinks that the Rosicrucians were attracted to the Operative Freemasons by the facts and legends of the latter, and that thus the two orders were connected with each other. The same building that was used by the gild, offered a desirable means for the secret assemblies of the early Freemasons, who, of course, were Rosicrucians. A set of tools and utensils, such as was presented in the fabled tomb of Father Rosencreutz, was introduced, and the first formal and solemn Lodge of Freemasons, on which occasion the name of Freemasons was publicly made known, was held in Masons' Hall, Masons' Alley, Basinghall Street, London, in the year 1646. Into this Lodge Elias Ashmole was admitted. Private meetings may have been held, and one at Warrington in Lancashire is mentioned in Ashmole's Life, but the name of a Freemasons' Lodge with all the other Lodge circumstances first came forward at the above date.

All this, he tells us, is upon record, though De Quincey does not tell us where it is to be found. Now we know, from authentic

¹ "Ueber den Ursprung und die vornehmsten Schicksale des Ordens der Rosenkreutzer und Freimaurer."

records, all this to be false. Ashmole is our authority. He is the very best authority, because he was an eye-witness and took a personal part in the events he records.

We have already seen, by the extracts given from Ashmole's diary, that there is no record of a Lodge held in 1646 at Masons' Hall; that the Lodge was held, with all "the attributes and circumstances of a Lodge," at Warrington; that Ashmole was then and there initiated as a Freemason, and not at London; and finally, that the record of the Lodge held at Masons' Hall, London, which is made by the same Ashmole, was in 1683 and not in 1646, or thirty-five years afterward.

A historian who thus mangles records to sustain a theory is not entitled to the respectful attention of a serious argument. De Quincey may be weighed for what he is worth. We can not allow him the excuse of ignorance. He evidently had Ashmole's diary under his eyes, and his misquotations could only have been made in bad faith.

Nicolai is more honorable in his mode of treating the question. He does not trace the use of Freemasonry directly and immediately from the Rosicrucian brotherhood. But he thinks that its mystical faith was the cause for the outspring of many like associations, such as the Theosophists. That, passing over into England, it met with the experimental philosophy of Bacon, as developed especially in his *New Atlantis*. That the combined influence of the two, the esoteric principles of the one and the experimental doctrines of the other, together with the existence of certain political motives, led to a meeting of philosophers who established the system of Freemasonry at Masons' Hall in 1646. He does not say so, but it is evident from the names that he gives that these philosophers were Astrologers, who were only a branch of the Rosicrucians devoted to a specialty.

The theory and the arguments of Nicolai have already been considered. They need no further discussion here.

Righellini's views are based on the book of Nicolai, and differ from them only in being, from his Gallic ignorance of English history, a little more inaccurate. The conclusions of Righellini have already been considered by us.

Now we meet with another theorist, scarcely more respectful or less a trifle than De Quincey, and who, not being a Free-

mason, labors under the handicap of an incorrect knowledge of the principles of the Order. As to his regard for accuracy, he takes for granted as authentic history the Leland manuscript.

George Sloane, in a very readable book published in London in 1849, under the title of *New Curiosities of Literature*, has a very long article in his second volume on *The Rosicrucians and Freemasons*. Adopting the theory that the latter come from the former, he argues, from what he calls proofs but which are no proofs at all, that "The Freemasons are not anterior to, do not precede, the Rosicrucians; and their principles, so far as they were avowed about the middle of the 17th century, being identical, *it is fair to presume* that the Freemasons were, in reality, the first incorporated body of Rosicrucians or Sapientes."

He admits that this is but a presumption, and as presumptions are not always facts, we can not admit his claim without evidence. Sloane goes on to support his presumption, in the following way:

"In the *Fama* of Andrea," he says, "we have the first sketch of a constitution which bound by oath the members to mutual secrecy, which proposed higher and lower grades, yet leveled all worldly distinctions in the common bonds of brotherhood, and which opened its privileges to all classes, making only purity of mind and purpose the condition of reception."

This is not correct. Long before the publication of the *Fama Fraternitatis* there were many secret associations in the Middle Ages, to say nothing of the Mysteries of antiquity, in which such constitutions prevailed, requiring secrecy under the severest penalties, dividing their system of esoteric instruction into different grades, establishing a bond of brotherhood, and always making purity of life and upright conduct the necessary conditions of the candidates for membership. Freemasonry needed not to seek the model of such a constitution from the Rosicrucians.

Another argument advanced by Mr. Sloane is this:

"The emblems of the two brotherhoods are the same in every respect — the plummet, the level, the compasses, the cross, the rose, and all the symbolic trumpery which the Rosicrucians named in their writings as the insignia of their imaginary associations, and which they also would have persuaded a credulous world concealed truths ineffable by mere language. Both, too, derived

their wisdom from Adam, adopted the same myth of building, connected themselves in the same unintelligible way with Solomon's Temple, affected to be seeking *light from the East* — in other words, the Cabala — and accepted the heathen Pythagoras among their adepts."

In this passage there are some claims not free from question. Mackey asserts that the emblems of the two Orders were not the same in any respect. He says the square and compasses were not ordinary nor usual Rosicrucian emblems. In one instance, in an illustration in the *Azoth Philosophorum* of Basil Valentine,¹ published at London, 1678, we will, it is true, find these tools forming part of a Rosicrucian figure, but Mackey says that they are there evidently used as phallic symbols, a meaning never attached to them in Freemasonry, whose explanation of them is taken from their operative use.

We know, from a relic discovered near Limerick, in Ireland, that the square and the level were used by the Operative Masons as emblems in the 16th or, perhaps, the 15th century, with the same meaning that is given to them by Freemasons of the present day. The Speculative Freemasons take nearly all their symbols from the tools and the language of the Operative Art. The Rosicrucians took theirs from astronomical and geometrical problems, and connected them with a system of theosophy and not with the art of building. The cross with the rose, referred to by Sloane, never were at any time emblems of the three degrees in Craft Freemasonry, and were put into such of the High Degrees of the middle of the 18th century as had in them a Rosicrucian element.

Again, the Rosicrucians had nothing to do with the Temple of Solomon. Their "invisible house," or their Temple, or "House of the Holy Ghost," was a religious and philosophic idea, much more of the type of Lord Bacon's House of Solomon in the Island of Bensalem than of the Temple of Jerusalem. Finally, the Freemasons in "seeking light from the East," intended no reference to the Cabala, which is never mentioned in any of their primitive rituals, but to the East as the source of physical light — the place of sunrising, which they adopted as a symbol of intellectual and moral light. It might, indeed, be easier to prove from

¹ A German alchemist, active in the latter part of the 15th century.

their symbols that the first Speculative Freemasons were sun-worshippers than that they were Rosicrucians, though neither theory would be correct.

If any one will take the trouble of reading the three books of Henricus Cornelius Agrippa's¹ *Occult Philosophy*, which may be considered as the text-book of the old Rosicrucian philosophy, he will see how little there is in common between Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry. One is a mystical system founded on the Cabala; the other the outgrowth of a very natural use of symbols taken from the customs and the tools of an operative art. The Rosicrucians were theosophists, whose doctrines were of angels and devils, of the elements, of the heavenly bodies and their influence on the affairs of men, and of the magical powers of numbers, etc.

The Alchemists, who have been called "physical Rosicrucians," adopted the metals and their changes, the elixir of life, and their universal solvent, as symbols, if we may believe Ethan Allen Hitchcock,² by which they concealed the purest dogmas of a religious life.

But Freemasonry has not and never had anything of this kind in its system. Its founders were builders, whose symbols, applied in their architecture, were of a Christian character. When their successors made this building fraternity a speculative association, they borrowed the symbols by which they sought to teach their philosophy, not from Rosicrucianism, not from magic, nor from the Cabala, but from the art to which they owed their origin. Every part of Speculative Freemasonry proves that it could not have come from Rosicrucianism. The two Orders had in common but one thing — they both had secrets which they carefully hid from outsiders.

Andrea sought, it is true, in his *Fama Fraternitatis*, to elevate Rosicrucianism to a more practical and useful character, and to make it useful for moral and intellectual reform. Even his system, which was the only one that could have had any influence on the English philosophers, is so thoroughly different

¹ Woodford says his real name was Von Nettesheim and that he was born at Cologne, Germany, 1486, died at Grenoble, France, in 1535. His principal works are: "On the Vanity of the Sciences" and "Libri Tres de Occulta Philosophia." See "Life" by Henry Morley.

² "Remarks upon Alchemy and the Alchemists." 1857.

in its principles from that of the Freemasonry of the 17th century, that a union of the two, or the tracing of one from the other, must have been out of the question.

A claim has been made that when Agrippa was in London, in 1510, he founded a secret society of Rosicrucians. This is possible, although, during his brief visit to London, Agrippa was the guest of the learned Dean Colet, and spent his time with his host in the study of the Bible. "I labored hard," he says himself, "at the Epistles of St. Paul." Still he may have found time to organize a society of Rosicrucians. At the beginning of the 16th century secret societies "chiefly composed," says Morley, "of curious and learned youths had become numerous, especially among the Germans, and toward the close of that century these secret societies were developed into the form of brotherhoods of Rosicrucians, each member of which gloried in styling himself Physician, Theosophist, Chemist, and now, by the mercy of God, Rosicrucian."¹

But to say of this society (if one was actually established), as has been said by a writer of the last century, that "this practice of initiation, or secret incorporation, thus and then first introduced has been handed down to our own times, and hence, apparently, the mysterious Eleusinian confederacies now known as the Lodges of Freemasonry,"² is to make an assertion that is neither upheld by historical testimony nor supported by any chain of reasoning or likelihood.

While the theory that Freemasonry was born of Rosicrucianism, and that its founders were the English Rosicrucians in the 17th century, is wholly unsound, there is no doubt that at a later period a Rosicrucian element was very largely used in the *Hautes Grades* or High Degrees.

¹ "The Life of Henry Cornelius Agrippa," by Henry Morley, p. 58.

² *Monthly Review*, London, 1798, vol. xxv, p. 30.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

THE ROSICRUCIANISM OF THE HIGH DEGREES



THE history of the High Degrees of Freemasonry begins with the inventions of the time of the Chevalier Michael Ramsay. But the efforts of such ritual makers had nothing in them of a Rosicrucian character. They were intended to support a theory that Freemasonry began in the Crusades, and that the first Freemasons were Templars. Such degrees were therefore not so much philosophic as chivalric or knightly. The Rite manufacturers, who succeeded, followed for the most part in their leaders' footsteps, and the degrees that were later on invented partook of the military nature, so that the title of "Chevalier" or "Knight," unknown to the early Freemasons, became in time common to the names of most of the new degrees. Thus we find in old and disused Rites, as well as in those still existing, such titles as "Knight of the Sword," "Knight of the Eagle," "Knight of the Brazen Serpent," and so many more that Ragon,¹ in his *Nomenclature*, lists no less than two hundred and ninety-two degrees of Masonic Knighthood, without exhausting the catalogue.

But it was not far into the 18th century before the element of Hermetic philosophy began to enter still newer degrees.

Among the first to whom we are to ascribe the responsibility of this novel infusion is a Frenchman named Antoine Joseph Pernelty, who was born in 1716 and died in 1800. He passed, therefore, the most active portion of his life in the midst of that flood of Masonic novelties which about the middle quarters of the 18th century swept over the continent of Europe and more especially the kingdom of France.

¹ Jean Baptiste Marie Ragon, born 1781, died 1862, a literary French Freemason of great ability and industry. Editor and historian, he was engaged at death upon a work covering all rites and degrees, now in manuscript form in archives of the Grand Orient of France.

Pernelty was at first a Roman Catholic and a Benedictine monk. Having at the age of forty-nine obtained an official release from his vows, he removed from Paris to Berlin, where for a short time he served Frederick the Great as his librarian.¹ Returning to Paris, he studied the mystical doctrines of Swedenborg, and published a translation of one of his works. He then went to Avignon, where he founded a new Rite, which, on its transfer to Montpellier, received the name of the "Academy of True Masons." We may well suppose that he introduced much of the theosophic mysticism of the Swedish sage, in parts of which there is a very strong tendency to Rosicrucianism, or at least to the Hermetic doctrines of the Rosicrucians. General Hitchcock, who was learned on mystical topics, wrote a book to prove that Swedenborg was a Hermetic philosopher; and his arguments are not easily upset.

But Pernelty was not a Swedenborgian only. He was a man of varied reading and had devoted his studies, among other branches of learning, to theology, philosophy, and the mathematical sciences. The taste for a mystical theology, which led him to adopt the views of Swedenborg, would scarcely permit him to escape the still more appetizing study of the Hermetic philosophers.

Accordingly we find him inventing other degrees, and among them the "Knight of the Sun," which is in its original ritual a mere condensation of Rosicrucian doctrines, especially as developed in the alchemical branch of Rosicrucianism.

There is not in the wide compass of Masonic degrees, one more emphatically Rosicrucian than this. The reference in its ritual to Sylphs, one of the four elementary spirits of the Rosicrucians; to the seven angels which formed a part of the Rosicrucian hierarchy; the dialogue between Father Adam and Truth in which the doctrines of Alchemy and the Cabala are discussed in the search of man for theosophic truth, and the adoption as its principal word of recognition of that which in the Rosicrucian system was deemed the primal matter of all things, — these are all sufficient to show the Hermetic spirit governing the inventor of the degree.

¹ Woodford, "Cyclopedia," points out that the German "Handbuch" does not mention this claim which is made by Bro. Mackey.

There have been many other degrees, most of which are now laid aside, whose very names openly indicate their Hermetic origin. Such are the "Hermetic Knight," the "Adept of the Eagle" (the word *adept* being technically used to mean an expert Rosicrucian), the "Grand Hermetic Chancellor," and the "Philosophic Cabalist." The list might be increased by fifty more, at least. There have been whole rites prepared on the basis of the Rosicrucian or Hermetic philosophy, such as the "Rite of Philalethes," the "Hermetic Rite," and the "Rite of Illuminated Theosophists," invented in 1767 by Benedict Chartanier, who united in it the notions of the Hermetic philosophy and the reflections of Swedenborg. Gadické tells us also, in his *Freimaurer-Lexicon*, of a so-called Masonic system which was introduced by the Marquis of Lernaïs to Berlin in 1758, the objects of which were the Hermetic Mystery and the Philosopher's Stone.

But the Hermetic Degree which to the present day has exercised the greatest influence upon the higher grades of Freemasonry is that of the Rose Croix. This name was given to it by the French. We must notice that in the French language no distinction has ever been made between *Rosenkreutzer* and *Rose Croix*. French writers have always translated the *Rosenkreutzer* of the German and the *Rosicrucian* of the English by their own words *Rose Croix*, and to this fact is due an error of some importance.

The first that we hear in history of a Rosicrucian Freemasonry, under that name, is about the middle of the 18th century. The society to which we refer was known as the "Gulden-und-Rosen Kreutzer," or the "Golden Rosicrucians." We find this title in a book published at Berlin, in 1714, by Sigmund Richter, under the assumed name of Sincerus Renatus, and with the title of *A True and Complete Preparation of the Philosopher's Stone by the Order of the Golden Rosicrucians*. This book contains the laws of the brotherhood, which Findel thinks bear plain proof of Jesuitical tinkering.

Richter describes a society which, if founded on the old Rosicrucians, differed from them in its principles. Findel speaks of these "Golden Rosicrucians" as if originally formed on this work of Richter, and in the spirit of the Jesuits, to repress liberty of thought and the healthy growth of intellect. If shaped at that early period, the beginning of the 18th century, it is unlikely to

have had a connection with Freemasonry. But the Order, as an attachment to Freemasonry, was not really perfected until about the middle of the 18th century. Findel says that it was after 1756.

The Order had nine degrees, all having Latin names, viz.: 1, Junior; 2, Theoreticus; 3, Practicus; 4, Philosophus; 5, Minor; 6, Major; 7, Adeptus; 8, Magister; 9, Magus. Based on the three primitive degrees of Freemasonry as giving a right to entrance, it boasted of coming from the ancient Rosicrucians, of having all their secrets, and of being the only body that could give a true explanation of the Masonic symbols, and it claimed, therefore, to be the fountain head. There is no doubt that this brotherhood was a perfect example of the influence sought to be given, about the middle of the 18th century, to Freemasonry by the doctrines of Rosicrucianism. The effort failed, however, to make it a Hermetic system. The Order of the Golden Rosicrucians, although for nearly half a century popular in Germany, and including many persons of high standing, at length began to decay, and died about the end of the 18th century.

Since then we hear no more of Rosicrucian Freemasonry, except what is preserved in degrees like that of the Knight of the Sun and a few others, still retained in the series of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

We said that the translation of the word *Rosicrucian* by *Rose Croix* has been the source of an important error. This is the confusing of the French degree of "Rose Croix," or "Knight of the Eagle and Pelican," with Rosicrucianism, to which it has no relation. Dr. Oliver, speaking of this degree, says that the earliest notice that he finds of it is in the *Fama Fraternitatis*, thus showing that he deemed it to be of Rosicrucian origin.

The modern Rose Croix, the climax of the French Rite, and the eighteenth of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, besides being in several other Masonic systems, has not in its construction a trace of Rosicrucianism, nor is there in any part of its ritual, rightly understood, the faintest allusion to the Hermetic philosophy. Such is the opinion of Brother Mackey. He speaks of the degree, of course, as it was originally. This has been somewhat changed. The French Freemasons, objecting to its sectarian character, changed it to what they have called the "Philo-

sophic Rose Croix." Thus they have given a Hermetic meaning to the letters on the cross, an example that has elsewhere been followed.

But the original Rose Croix, in the Chapter established so it is said in 1747, at Arras, France, was a purely Christian, if not a Roman Catholic degree. The leading symbols, the rose, cross, eagle, and pelican, its ceremonies, and even its words and signs of recognition, refer to Jesus Christ, the expounder of the new law to take the place of the old law that ceased to operate when "the veil of the temple was rent."

The Rose Croix, in its pure ritual, was an attempt to apply the rites, symbols, and legends of the foundation degrees of Ancient Craft Freemasonry to the last and greatest dispensation; to add to the first Temple of Solomon, and the second of Zerubabel, a third, the one to which Christ alluded when he said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" — a saying wholly beyond the ignorant people standing around him at the time, but the meaning of which is perfectly clear to the Rose Croix Freemason who consults the original ritual of his degree. In all this there is nothing exclusively alchemical, Hermetic, or Rosicrucian, and Brother Mackey says it is a great error to suppose that there is anything but Christian philosophy in the degree as originally invented.

The name of the degree has undoubtedly led to the confusion in its history. But, in fact, the words *Rosæ Crucis*, common both to the old Rosicrucian philosophers and to the modern Rose Croix Freemasons, had in each a different meaning, and some have supposed a different source. The title has by many writers been thought to allude to the *ros*, or dew, which was deemed by the alchemists to be a powerful solvent of gold, and to *crux*, the cross, which was the chemical character representing light. Mosheim says:

"The title of *Rosicrucians* evidently denotes the chemical philosophers and those who blended the doctrines of religion with the secrets of chemistry. The denomination itself is drawn from the science of chemistry; and they only who are acquainted with the peculiar language of the chemists can understand its true signification and energy. It is not compounded, as many imagine, of the two words *rosa* and *crux*, which signify *rose* and

cross, but of the latter of these words and the Latin word *ros*, which signifies *dew*. Of all natural bodies *dew* is the most powerful solvent of gold. The *cross*, in the chemical style, is equivalent to *light*, because the figure of the cross exhibits at the same time the three Roman letters 'LVX' of which the word *lux*, i.e., *light*, is compounded. Now, *lux* is called by this sect the *seed* or *menstruum of the red dragon*; or, in other words, that gross and corporeal, when properly digested and modified, produces gold."¹

Notwithstanding that this able historian has declared that "all other explications of this term are false and chimerical," others more learned perhaps than he, in this especial subject, have differed from him in opinion, and trace the title to *rosa*, not to *ros*.

There is certainly a controversy about the source of *Rosicrucian* as applied to the Hermetic philosophers, but there is none whatever in reference to that of the Masonic *Rose Croix*. Everyone admits, because the fact is forced upon him by the ritual and the spirit of the degree, that the title comes from *rose* and *cross*, and that *rose* signifies Christ, and *cross* the means of His death. In the Masonic degree, *Rose Croix* signifies *Christ on the cross*, a meaning that is carried out by the jewel, but one which is never attached to the rose and cross of the Rosicrucians, where *rose* most probably was the symbol of secrecy,² and the *cross* may have had either a Christian or a chemical application; probably the latter.

Again, we see in the four leading symbols of the Rose Croix degree, as understood in the early rituals (at least in their spirit), the same Christian meaning, entirely free from Rosicrucianism. These symbols are the *eagle*, *pelican*, *rose*, and *cross*, all combined to form the beautiful and expressive jewel of the degree.

Thus the writer of the Book of Exodus, referring to the belief that the eagle assists its feeble young in their first flights by bearing them on its wings, represents Jehovah as saying, "Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you unto myself." Accepting this idea, the Rose Croix Freemasons took the eagle as a symbol of Christ in

¹ Mosheim, "Ecclesiastical History," Maclane's Translation, cent. xvii, sec. i, vol. iii, p. 436, note.

² As in the phrase "sub rosa" or "under the rose," both meaning exchanges of information in confidence.

His divine character, bearing the children of His adoption in their upward course, and teaching them with unequalled tenderness to use their own wings, and soar from the mire of earth to a holier sphere. Thus the eagle on the jewel is shown with outstretched wings, as if ready for flight.

The pelican, "vulning (wounding) herself and in her piety," as the heralds call it, is, says Sloane Evans, "a sacred emblem of great beauty and striking import, and the representation of it occurs not unfrequently among the ornaments of churches."¹ The allusion to Christ as a Saviour, shedding His blood for the sins of the world, is too evident to need explanation.

The rose represents Christ in one passage of Scripture,² where He is called the "Rose of Sharon," but the flower was always accepted in the church as one of His symbols. The fact that in the jewel of the Rose Croix the blood-red rose appears attached to the center of the cross, as though crucified upon it, requires no special understanding of the science of symbolism to discover its meaning.

The cross, it is true, was a very old symbol of eternal life, especially among the Egyptians, but since the crucifixion it has been adopted by Christians as an emblem of Him who suffered upon it. "The cross," says Didron, "is more than a mere figure of Christ; it is, in iconography, either Christ Himself or His symbol."³ As such it is used in the Freemasonry of the Rose Croix.

Evidently the Rose Croix was, at the beginning, a purely Christian degree. There was no intention of its founders to borrow for its construction anything from occult philosophy, but simply to express in its symbols a Christian sentiment.

While Rosicrucianism had no concern with Freemasonry in the 17th century, yet in the succeeding century, under various influences, especially, perhaps, the spread of the mystical doctrines of Swedenborg, a Hermetic or Rosicrucian element was put into some of the degrees. But that element went no farther; it never affected the whole Masonic system.

Let us now sum up the situation by submitting some opinions of Masonic students. Mackey says that from the beginning

¹ "The Art of Blazon," p. 130.

² "Canticles," II, 1.

³ See "Annales Archéologiques," by Adolphe Napoléon Didron. 1884.

of the 19th century Rosicrucianism has been dead to Freemasonry. Albert Pike said in a letter to Robert F. Gould, "It is very certain that, at an early day, there were in England, as well as on this Continent, some men, perhaps many, who devoted their time to the study of that religious philosophy known by the different names of Hermeticism, Rosicrucianism, and Alchemy, — the last being only pretendedly the 'science' of practical Alchemy, but using the terms of science to conceal the Rosicrucian and Hermetic Dogma. Several of the symbols used by these philosophers to express their doctrines are now in the keeping of Freemasonry, notably the Compasses and the Square. Many things combine to prove that the symbols had other meanings for the few than those which they had for the many—the attractions which the Degrees had for men of high rank, the Preface to the Book of 'Long Livers,' the real meaning of the Substitute for the Master's Word, the Sun, Moon, and Master of the Lodge as its Lights, the 47th Problem, which is not a symbol of any *moral* truth, and the expression in the Regius Manuscript that 'Gemetry' took the name of Masonry. These are strengthened by the traditional connection of Pythagoras with Masonry, and by the charge to keep the secrets 'of the Chamber.' I think that the Philosophers becoming Freemasons, introduced into Masonry its Symbolism — Secret, except among themselves, — in the Middle Ages, and not after the decline of Operative Masonry began. I find in the Blue Degrees certain Symbols that were used a hundred years or more by the Hermetic writers, before the so-called revival of Freemasonry in England."¹

There are also the papers, *Freemasonry and Hermeticism*, by Bro. A. F. A. Woodford, and *Rosicrucians, their History and Aims*, by Bro. W. Wynn Westcott, see *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, I, 28, and VII, 36. Brother Woodford adds to those mentioned by Brother Pike the following emblems, "The rule and plumb-rule, the perfect ashlar, the two pillars, the circle within the parallel lines, the point within a circle, and the sacred delta. The pent-alpha, or five-pointed star, which Pythagoras is asserted to have taken from Egypt to Crotona and adopted as the mystic symbol of his fraternity. Lastly, there is the hexapha or hexalpha, other-

¹ These extracts are from letters, under date of Nov. 8, 1889, and Feb. 7, 1890, given in "Collected Essays," by R. F. Gould, 1913. Wm. Tait, Belfast, Ireland.

wise called Solomon's Seal or the Shield of David; this was the great symbol of Hermeticism, and besides being a high Masonic emblem, was also a Masonic mark, used all over the East in medieval times, as well as a mystical, tribal and religious mark." See also the Report of the Historian, Bro. Ossian H. Lang, *Proceedings*, 1918, page 283, Grand Lodge, New York, for lists of symbols and their place in the Masonic and Rosicrucian systems.

Bro. Lang says, page 293, "An organized Fraternity of the Rosy Cross probably never existed outside of books," an opinion akin to that of Bro. E. L. Hawkins, *Concise Cyclopedia*, page 202, "But it appears to be extremely doubtful whether there ever was any organized Society of Rosicrucians, either in England or on the Continent at that time (1641 and 1646, when Sir Robert Moray and Ashmole were initiated) or before it."

Another view is that of Bro. Woodford, *Cyclopedia*, page 584, "That a Rosicrucian, hermetic, alchemical, astrological, magical association existed toward the middle and the end of the seventeenth century, we think is pretty certain; and though we may give up Christian Rosenkreutz's personal reality, and the legend of the order, we need not, it appears to us, doubt the existence of a Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross. But having said this, we repudiate any actual connexion as between it and Freemasonry, — except the condition of secrecy, perhaps, and mysterious symbolism."

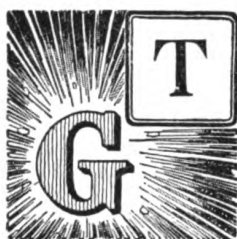
The reader may also consult to advantage *The Real History of the Rosicrucians* by Bro. A. E. Waite who criticizes with vigor the work of Bro. Hargrave Jennings, *The Rosicrucians, their Rites and Mysteries*. The position of Bro. Waite may be briefly put, in his own words, page 403, "That there is no traceable connection between Masonry and Rosicrucianism."

Among these conflicting opinions it is well to remember that the rise of the same emblems is by no means a sure sign that Freemasonry took them from or gave them to Rosicrucianism. Again, the very existence of a society of the Rosicrucians in the 17th century is doubted but that is not the case with the Masonic Order.¹

¹ There is a modern organization of which the official account appears in the "History of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia," by Bro. Dr. Wm. Wynn Westcott, the M. W. Supreme Magus, 1900, London.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

THE PYTHAGOREANS AND FREEMASONRY



HERE is a popular theory crediting, if not the actual origin of Freemasonry to Pythagoras, at least its introduction into Europe by him, through a school which he started at Crotona, in Italy. This theory was a favorite one among our early writers. But it may very properly be placed among the legends of the Order, since it lacks all the requisites of historical authority for support.

The notion was most probably taken from what has been called the Leland manuscript, because it is said to have been found in the Bodleian Library, in the handwriting of that celebrated student.¹ The author, Hearne, of the *Life of John Leland* gives this account of the manuscript:

"The original is said to be the handwriting of King Henry VI. and copied by Leland by order of his highness, King Henry VIII. If the authenticity of this ancient monument of literature remains unquestioned, it demands particular notice in the present publication, on account of the singularity of the subject, and no less from a due regard to the royal writer and our author, his transcriber, indefatigable in every part of literature. It will also be admitted, acknowledgment is due to the learned Mr. Locke, who, amidst the closest studies and the most strict attention to human understanding, could unbend his mind in search of this ancient treatise, which he first brought from obscurity in the year 1796."²

This work was first brought to public notice by appearing in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for September, 1753, where it is said

¹ John Leland, born in London 1506, died 1552, chaplain and librarian to Henry VIII. he received power to search for records and manuscripts in all the religious houses of England. His work, mainly in manuscript, was deposited in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

² "Life of John Leland," p. 67.

to have been previously printed at Frankfort, in Germany, in 1748, from a copy found in "the writing-desk of a deceased brother."

The title of it, as given in the magazine, is in the following words: "Certayne Questyons wyth Awnsweres to the same, Concernynge the MYSTERY OF MACONRYE; wryttene by the Hande of Kynge Henrye the Sixthe of the Name, and faithfullye copyed by me Johan Leylande, Antiquarius, by the commaunde of His Highnesse."

Masonic critics today believe that the document is a forgery. Brother Mackey thought it was most probably written about the time and in the spirit in which Chatterton composed his imitations of the Monk Rowley, and of Ireland with his impositions of Shakespeare, and was prepared as an attempt to imitate the language of the 15th century, and as a pious fraud planned to elevate the Masonic Fraternity by furnishing the evidence of its very ancient origin.

Such were not, however, the views of the Masonic writers late in the 18th and early in the 19th centuries. They accepted the printed copy — for the original manuscript has never been seen — with firm faith as an authentic document. Hutchinson gave it in his *Spirit of Masonry*, Preston put it in the second and enlarged edition of his *Illustrations*, Calcott in his *Candid Disquisition*, Dermott in his *Ahiman Rezon*, and Krause in his *Drei Ältesten Kunsturkunden*. In none of these is there the faintest hint of uncertainty. Oliver said: "I entertain no doubt of the genuineness and authenticity of this valuable manuscript." The same view was held by Righellini among the French, and by Krause, Fessler, and Lenning among the Germans.

Halliwell was perhaps the first of English students to doubt its genuineness. After a long and unsuccessful search in the Bodleian Library for the original, he came very naturally to the conclusion that it is a forgery. Hugan and Woodford arrived at the same conclusion, and it is generally agreed that the Leland or Locke manuscript (for it is known by both titles) is a document of uncertain historic character.

But we must not overlook what has been said to the contrary. As to Henry VI. we read that "In 1442, he was initiated into Masonry, and from that time spared no pains to obtain a com-

plete knowledge of the art, . . . and honored them with his sanction.”¹ And again, “The attempt has often been made to prove that Henry VI. was a zealous patron of the Freemasons. A curious manuscript, purporting to have been drawn up in the king’s own handwriting, is frequently cited to attest his affection for the Craft. The weakness of Henry VI.’s intellect is well known, and also his disposition to pry into the mysteries of that strange science of alchemy. It is possible that his attention may have been directed to the mystic rites which were practiced in the initiation into the secrets of Masonry, as furnishing him a probable solution of the problem involved in the pursuit of the Philosopher’s Stone. However, the original manuscript, of which a copy is said to have been found in the year 1748 in Germany, has never been produced. A careful examination of the pamphlet, republished by Krause, convinces me that it is genuine and entitled to full credence. Who the author was is uncertain, but it presents all the appearance, from the phraseology and antique orthography at least, of having been written as early as the middle of the 15th century. The traditions of the fraternity are also as accurately transmitted by this manuscript as by those which Masonic historians have accepted to be genuine. Among other legends which it contains, is one that Venetians brought Freemasonry from the East. How closely this corresponds with the actual transmission of architectural art to the West readily appears. Whoever wrote the document in question was profoundly versed in the secrets possessed by the Craft.”²

“Gould, in his *Concise History*, says (the manuscript mentioned above) ‘was at one time generally accepted as an authentic document of the Craft. But the view is not shared by modern writers, who regard it as a palpable fraud and wholly unworthy of the critical acumen which has been lavished on its contents.’³ We are not in possession of any new facts which would justify a reversal of this judgment, but the data on which the original sentence of condemnation was based seems wholly inadequate. Many of the arguments are trivial and puerile in the extreme, and some of them the result of prejudice against the High Degrees. This is

¹ “Illustrations of Masonry,” Preston, p. 124; “Ancient Constitutions,” Anderson, p. 36.

² “Early History and Antiquities of Freemasonry,” by George F. Fort, pages 129 and 417.

³ “Concise History of Freemasonry,” Robert F. Gould, p. 221.

the day when even our sacred books are made the target of destructive criticisms. It is a 'fad,' and while we can not say the 'Leland' manuscript is genuine, we *do* say that most arguments against it are puerile, trivial, merely negative, or perhaps the result of prejudice."¹

"The Editor of the *New Age* has in my opinion, presented some very cogent reasons for a rehearing of the case."²

The Leland manuscript claims to be answers by some Freemason to questions proposed by King Henry VI., who, it would seem, must have taken some interest in the "Mystery of Masonry," and had sought to obtain a knowledge of its true character. The following are among the questions and answers:

"Q. Where dyd ytt [*Freemasonry*] begynne?

"A. Ytt dyd begynne with the fyrst menne, yn the Este, which were before the fyrste Manne of the Weste, and comynge westlye, ytt hathe broughte herwyth alle confortes to the wylde and comfortlesse.

"Q. Who dyd brynge ytt Westlye?

"A. The Venetians [*Phœnicians*] who beyng grate Merchaundes, comed ffyrst ffrome the Este yn Venetia [*Phœnicia*] ffor the commodyte of Merchaundysinge beithe [*both*] Este and Weste bey the redde and Myddlelonde [*Mediterranean*] Sees.

"Q. Howe comede ytt yn Englonde?

"A. Peter Gower [*Pythagoras*] a Grecian journeyedde ffor kunnyng yn Egypt and in Syria and in everyche Londe whereat the Venetians [*Phœnicians*] hadde plauntedde Maconrye and wynnynge Entraunce yn al Lodges of Maconnes, he lerned muche, and retournedde and woned [*dwelt*] yn Grecia Magna wachsynge [*growing*] and becommynge a myghtye wyseacre [*philosopher*] and grateliche renouned and here he framed a grate Lodge at Groton [*Crotona*] and maked many Maconnes, some whereoffe dyd journeye yn Fraunce, and maked manye Maconnes wherefromme, yn processe of Tyme, the Arte passed yn Englonde."

Brother Mackey was convinced that there was a French original of this essay, from which language the translator put it into old English. The inner proofs of this are to be found

¹ George Fleming Moore in the *New Age*, October, 1904.

² Robert F. Gould in his "Collected Essays and Papers Relating to Freemasonry," p. 265. Tait, Belfast, Ireland, 1913.

in the many peculiarly French turns and twists in the words and phrases. Thus we meet with *Peter Gower*, evidently derived from *Pythagore*, pronounced *Petagore*, the French for Pythagoras; *Maconrye* and *Maconnes*, for *Masonry* and *Masons*, the French *c* in the word being used instead of the English *s*; the phrase *wynnyng the Facultye of Abrac*, which is a pure Gallic idiom, instead of *acquiring the faculty*, the word *gagner* being indifferently used in French as signifying to *win* or to *acquire*; the word *Frères* for *Brethren*; and the statement, in the spirit of French nationality, that Freemasonry was brought into England out of France. He held that none of these idiomatic phrases or national peculiarities would have been likely to occur if the manuscript had been originally written by an Englishman and in the English language.

Be this as it may, the document had no sooner appeared than it inspired Masonic writers with the idea that Freemasonry and the school of Pythagoras, which he established at Crotona, in Italy, about five centuries before Christ, were closely connected. This idea was very generally adopted by their successors, so that it came at last to be a point of the orthodox Masonic creed.

Preston, in his *Illustrations of Masonry*, commenting on the dialogue in this document, says that "The records of the fraternity inform us that Pythagoras was regularly initiated into Masonry; and being properly instructed in the mysteries of the Art, he was much improved, and propagated the principles of the Order in other countries into which he afterwards traveled."

Calcott, in his *Candid Disquisition*, speaks of the Leland manuscript as "an antique relation, from whence may be gathered many of the original principles of the ancient society, on which the institution of Freemasonry was ingrafted" — by the "ancient society," meaning the school of Pythagoras.

Hutchinson, in his *Spirit of Masonry*, quotes this "ancient Masonic record," as he calls it, and says that "it brings us positive evidence of the Pythagorean doctrine and Basilidean¹ princi-

¹ Brother Hutchinson here refers to the tenets taught by Basilides, who died about A.D. 130, the founder of a philosophic sect at Alexandria under the Emperors Trajan and Hadrian. Among other features was the issuing of mind from a Supreme Power, named Abraxas, and the creation of 365 worlds by a number of angelic powers, this word being taken from Abraxas, a Greek word of which the letters are calculated to make the number 365. Note the reference in the above text by Bro. Mackey to "Abrac."

ples making the foundation of our religious and moral duties." Two lectures in his work discuss the doctrines of Pythagoras in connection with the Masonic system.

This theory of the Pythagorean origin of Freemasonry does not owe its existence to the writers of the middle of the 18th century. It was advanced by Dr. James Anderson soon after the Revival in 1717. In the first edition of the *Constitutions*, 1723, he refers to Pythagoras as having borrowed great knowledge from the Chaldean Magi and the Babylonish Jews. Martin Clare,¹ in his *Defence of Masonry*, 1730, says: "I am fully convinced that Freemasonry is very nearly allied to the old Pythagorean Discipline, from whence, I am persuaded, it may in some circumstances very justly claim a descent."

The old manuscript constitutions containing the *Legend of the Gild*, or the *Legend of the Craft*, with a single exception, have no reference to Pythagoras. That exception is to be found in the Cooke MS., where the legendist, after telling the story of the two pillars inscribed with all the sciences and erected by Jabal before the Flood, adds, in lines 318-326, this statement:

"And after this flode many yeres as the cronycle telleth these ii were founde and as the polycronicon seyeth that a grete clerke that called putogaras [*Pythagoras*] fonde that one and hermes the philisophre fonde that other, and thei tought forthe the sciens that thei fonde therein ywritten."

Although the Cooke MS. is among the earliest of the old records, the later manuscript constitutions left out this allusion to Pythagoras. This was because the writer of the Cooke MS., being in possession of the *Polychronicon* of the monk Ranulph Higden, an edition of which had been printed during his time by William Caxton, he liberally borrowed from that historical work and used parts of it in his legend.

The story of the finding of a pillar by Pythagoras is one of these cases. The writer says he owes the statement to Higden's *Polychronicon*. But it formed no part of the *Legend of the Craft*, and therefore no notice is taken of it in the manuscript copies where Pythagoras is not even mentioned.

¹ A London schoolmaster and scientist who died in 1751. Deputy Grand Master in 1741. See "Ars Quatuor Coronatorum," vol. iv, p. 33, for examination of the authorship of the reply, "A Defence of Masonry," to the attack called "Masonry Dissected."

Evidently, in the 14th and following centuries, to the beginning of the 18th, the theory of the Pythagorean origin of Freemasonry, or of the connection of the Grecian philosopher with it, was not admitted by the Craft as part of the traditional history of the Fraternity. There is no safer rule than that of the old schoolmen, which teaches us that we must reason alike concerning that which does not appear and that which does not exist — "*de non apparentibus et de non existentibus, eadem est ratio.*" The old craftsmen who shaped the Legend were workmen and not scholars. They said nothing about Pythagoras because they knew nothing about him.

About the beginning of the 18th century a change took place, not only in the Masonic institution, but also in the men who were producing the alteration, or we might more properly call it the revolution.

During the 17th, and perhaps in the 16th century, many persons were admitted into the Lodges of Operative Freemasons who were not professional builders, but the society had a purely speculative form in 1717. The Revival in that year, by the election of Anthony Sayer, "Gentleman," as Grand Master; Jacob Lamball, a "Carpenter," and Joseph Elliott, a "Captain," as Grand Wardens, proves that the control of the society was leaving the hands of the Operative Freemasons.

Among those engaged in the reconstruction of the institution were James Anderson and Theophilus Desaguliers. Anderson was a Master of Arts, and afterward a Doctor of Divinity, the minister of a Scottish Presbyterian church in London, and an author; Desaguliers was a Doctor of Laws, a fellow of the Royal Society, and a teacher of Experimental Philosophy having no little reputation.

Both of these men, as scholars, knew the system of Pythagoras. They were not unwilling to take advantage of his method of teaching, and to use some of his symbols in the Order they were renovating.

Jamblichus, the biographer of Pythagoras,¹ tells us that while the latter sage was on his travels he was initiated into all the

¹Greek philosopher, supposed to have lived between the years 570-504 before Christ. His history is uncertain but the philosophy credited to him is said to have greatly influenced Plato. Among tenets bearing his approval are said to be the use of souls by more than one body, transmigration as it is called, and the idea of numbers being the mainspring of the universe.

mysteries of Byblos and Tyre and those which were practiced in many parts of Syria. As these mysteries were originally received by the Phœnicians from Egypt, he went there, where he remained twenty-two years, occupying himself in the study of geometry, astronomy, and all the initiations of the gods, until he was carried a captive into Babylon by the soldiers of Cambyzes. There he freely associated with the Magi in their religion and their studies, and, having obtained a thorough knowledge of music, the science of numbers, and other arts, he finally returned to Greece.¹

The school of philosophy which Pythagoras afterwards established at Crotona, Italy, differed from those of all the other philosophers of Greece, in the strict initiation to which his disciples were subjected, in the degrees of probation into which they were divided, and in the method which he adopted of veiling his instructions under symbolic forms. In his various travels he had received mystical notions from the Egyptians and the Chaldeans, and had borrowed some of their modes of initiation into religious mysteries, which he used to teach his own principles.

Grote, in his *History of Greece*, has very justly said that "Pythagoras represents in part the scientific tendencies of his age, in part also the spirit of mysticism and of special fraternities for religious and ascetic observance which became diffused throughout Greece in the 6th century before the Christian era."

Of the philosophy of Pythagoras and of his method of instruction, which certainly bore a very close resemblance to that adopted by the founders of the speculative system, such trained scholars as Anderson and Desaguliers certainly were not ignorant. If, among those engaged with them in the construction of this improved school of Speculative Freemasonry, there were any whose limited ability would not enable them to consult the Greek biographies of Pythagoras by Jamblichus and by Porphyry, they had at hand an English translation of M. Dacier's life of the philosopher, containing also a thorough explanation of his symbols, together with a translation of the *Commentaries of Hierodes on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras*, all in one volume and published in London, 1707, by the noted bookseller, Jacob Tonson.

¹ "Jamblichus de Pythagorica Vita," c. iii, iv.

There was abundant material and ready opportunity to know the philosophy of Pythagoras, his method of initiation, and his system of symbols. It is not, therefore, surprising that these "Revivalists" should have delighted, as Clare has done in his *Defence of Masonry*, to compare the two schools of the Pythagoreans and the Freemasons; that they should have dwelt on their great similarity; and in the development of their speculative system should have adopted many symbols from the former which do not appear to have been known to or used by the old Operative Freemasons whom they succeeded.

Among the first Pythagorean symbols adopted by the Speculative Freemasons was the symbolism of the science of numbers. This appears in the earliest rituals. Of this, Dr. Oliver has justly said, in his *Pythagorean Triangle*, that "the Pythagoreans had so high an opinion of it that they considered it to be the origin of all things, and thought a knowledge of it to be equivalent to a knowledge of God."

This symbolism of numbers, used in Speculative Freemasonry at a very early period, has been enlarged in revisions of the lectures, until it is one of the most important and curious parts of the system of Freemasonry. But we have no evidence that the same system of numerical symbolism, having the Pythagorean and modern Masonic explanation, prevailed among the Craft before the beginning of the 18th century. It was the work of the Revivalists, who, as scholars familiar with the mystical philosophy of Pythagoras, deemed it wise to introduce it into the equally mystical philosophy of Speculative Freemasonry.

The Traveling Freemasons, Builders, or Operative Freemasons of the Middle Ages, who preceded the Speculative Freemasons of the 18th century, did not, so far as we can learn, practice directly the symbolism of Pythagoras. Their symbols, such as the *Vesica Piscis*, the Cross, the Rose, or certain mathematical figures, were derived either from the legends of the church or from the principles of geometry applied to the art of building. These skillful architects who, in the dark ages, when few men could read or write, erected edifices surpassing the works of ancient Greece or Rome, and which are the admiration of modern builders, were wonderful in their peculiar ability, but they borrowed nothing from Pythagoras unless we include

that theorem in geometry that is rightly or wrongly credited to him.

Between the period of the Revival and the adoption of the Prestonian system, in 1772, the lectures of Freemasonry underwent at least seven revisions, usually said to be at the hands of such scholars as Dr. Desaguliers; Martin Clare, a president of the Royal Society; Thomas Dunckerley, a man of considerable literary attainments, and others of like character. During this period there was a gradual addition of Pythagorean symbols. Among these, the one most noted is the forty-seventh proposition of Euclid, said to have been discovered by Pythagoras, and thus the introducer of it into the Masonic system, in his explanation of the symbol, claims the sage to have been "an ancient brother."

For some time after the Revival, the symbols of Pythagoras, growing into gradual use among the Craft, were referred to simply as an evidence of the great similarity which existed between the two systems. This theory, so far as it concerns modern Speculative Freemasonry, may be accepted.

The most liberal belief on this subject was that the two systems were nearly allied, but, except in the modified statement of Clare, already quoted from his *Defence of Masonry*, there was no claim in the years immediately succeeding the Revival that the one was of direct descent from the other.

None of the speeches, lectures, or essays of the early part of the 18th century, which have been preserved, refer to this as an official theory of the Craft.

Drake,¹ in his speech before the Grand Lodge of York, delivered in 1726, does, indeed, speak of Pythagoras, not as the founder of Freemasonry, but only in connection with Euclid and Archimedes as experts in Geometry, whose works have been the basis "on which the learned have built at different times so many noble superstructures." Geometry, he calls "that noble and useful science which must have begun and goes hand-in-hand with Masonry," an assertion which, to use the old chorus of the Freemasons, "nobody will deny."

¹ Francis Drake, historian, initiated at York, September, 1725. Grand Master in 1761. Speech mentioned above may be found in Bro. W. J. Hughan's "Masonic Sketches and Reprints," and is noted for its very early reference, December, 1726, to all three of the Craft Degrees.

To say that Geometry is closely connected with Operative Freemasonry, and that Pythagoras was a great geometrician, is very different from saying that he was a Freemason and taught Freemasonry in Europe.

Martin Clare, in his lecture on the *Advantages Enjoyed by the Fraternity*, 1735, does not even mention the name of Pythagoras, although, in one passage at least, when referring to "those great and worthy spirits with whom we are intimately related," he had a fair opportunity to refer to that wise leader.

A Discourse upon Masonry, delivered before a Lodge of England in 1742, in Brother Mackey's possession, in which the origin of the Order is fully discussed, contained not one word of reference to Pythagoras. The same silence is preserved in a *Lecture on the Connection between Freemasonry and Religion*, by the Rev. C. Brockwell, published in 1747.

After the middle of the century the frequent references in the lectures to the Pythagorean symbols, and especially to that important one, in its Masonic as well as its geometrical value, the forty-seventh proposition, led the members of the society to give Pythagoras a relationship to the Order to which historically he had no claim. Thus, in *A Search after Truth*, delivered to a Lodge in 1752, Brother Mackey quotes the author as saying that "Solon, Plato, and Pythagoras, and from them the Grecian literati in general, in a great measure, were obliged for their learning to Masonry and the labors of some of our ancient brethren."

When this notion of the Pythagorean origin of Freemasonry began to take root in the minds of the Craft, it was more firmly established by the appearance in 1753, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, of that document already quoted, to the effect that Pythagoras, learning his Freemasonry of the Eastern Magi, brought it to Italy, and established a Lodge at Crotona, whence the institution spread throughout Europe, and from France into England.

But the sect of Pythagoras did not last longer than the end of the reign of Alexander the Great. So far from increasing its Lodges or schools after the Christian era, we may cite the authority of the learned Dacier,¹ who says that "in after ages there were here and there some disciples of Pythagoras, but these were

¹ André Dacier, born 1651, died 1722. From 1713 life secretary of the French Academy.

only private persons who never established any society, nor had the Pythagoreans any longer a public school."

Therefore, as to the Pythagorean origin of Freemasonry we may conclude: The mediæval Freemasons held no such theory, nor in their architectural labors did they adopt any of his symbols.

The writer of the Cooke MS., in 1450, having at hand Higden's *Polychronicon*, in Trevisa's translation, a new edition of which had just been printed by Caxton, put into the *Legend of the Craft* some of the historical statements (such as they were) of the monk of Chester, but they formed no part of the original Legend. In the later *Old Records* these additions were rejected. The *Legend of the Craft*, as accepted by the writers of the manuscripts following that of the Cooke, from 1550 to 1701, did not mention Pythagoras.

Upon the Revival, 1717, the scholars who worked upon the scheme, finding the symbolic teaching of Pythagoras very useful, adopted some of its symbols. These symbols increased. The name and the philosophy of Pythagoras became familiar to the Craft. Finally, in 1753, a document was published which claimed him as the founder of Freemasonry. This theory is favored by a few writers, and the Order has it as part of the orthodox creed, that Pythagoras was a Freemason. Early Masonic tradition and historical records do not support such a belief.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

FREEMASONRY AND THE GnostICS



FAR from rare hypothesis seeks to trace a connection between Gnosticism and Freemasonry, and perhaps even an origin of the latter from the former. This has been repeatedly advanced, and is therefore worthy of some examination. One of these instances is in a work of C. W. King, published in 1864, under the title of *The Gnostics and Their Remains, Ancient and Mediæval*.

Mr. King is not a Freemason. Like all the non-masonic writers, such as Barruel, Robison, De Quincey, and a host of others, who have attempted to discuss the history and character of Freemasonry, he has shown much misunderstanding of the subject. In fact, these self-appointed critics, when treating of subjects with which they are not and can not be familiar, remind one of the busybodies of Plautus, of whom the latter has said that, while pretending to know everything, they know nothing — "*Qui omnia se simulant scire nec quicquam sciunt.*"

Very justly has Bro. W. J. Hughan called this work of King's, so far as its Masonic theories are concerned, one of an "unmasonic and unhistoric character."

But King, it must be admitted, was not the first writer who sought to trace Freemasonry to a Gnostic origin.

A pamphlet was published in 1725, a copy of which has been preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, England, among the manuscripts of Dr. Rawlinson,¹ and which bears the title of *Two Letters to a Friend. The First concerning the Society of Free-Masons. The Second, giving an Account of the Most Ancient Order of Gormogons*, etc. We find in the first letter treating of the Freemasons the following passage:

¹ Richard Rawlinson, born 1689, died 1755. Initiated, 1726, and Grand Steward, 1734. A leading scholar of his day and a collector of books and manuscripts. See "*Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*," vol. II. Bro. Woodford calls him "a zealous Freemason."

"But now, Sir, to draw toward a conclusion; and to give my opinion seriously, concerning these prodigious Virtuosi; — My belief is, that if they fall under any denomination at all, or belong to any sect of men, which has hitherto appeared in the world, they may be ranked among the GNOSTICS, who took their original from Simon Magus; these were a set of men, which ridiculed not only Christianity, but even rational morality; teaching that they should be saved by their capacious knowledge and understanding of no mortal man could tell what. They babbled of an amazing intelligence they had, from nobody knows whence. They amused and puzzled the hair-brained, unwary crowd with superstitious interpretations of extravagant talismanic characters and abstruse significations of uncommon Cabalistic words; which exactly agrees with the proceedings of our modern Freemasons."

We must confess that the true value of this pamphlet was not such as to have preserved it from the literary tomb which would have hidden it had not the zeal of a collector of such curios preserved a single copy as a relic. Yet the notion of some relationship of Freemasonry to Gnosticism was not in later years altogether cast aside and forgotten.

Hutchinson says that "Under our present profession of Masonry, we allege our morality was originally deduced from the school of Pythagoras, and that the Basilidean system of religion furnished us with some tenets, principles, and hieroglyphics."¹ Basilides, the founder of the sect which bears his name, was the most eminent of the Eastern Gnostics.

About the time of the making, or perhaps it was only the amending, of the High Degrees on the continent of Europe, a variety of opinions of the origin of Freemasonry — many of them absurd — sprang up among Masonic students. Among these theorists, there were not a few who traced the Order to the early Christians, because they found it, as they supposed, among the Gnostics, and especially its most important sect, the Basilideans.

Several of the German and French writers have also suggested somewhat plainly the hypothesis of a connection, more or less intimate, between the Gnostics and the Freemasons.

We do not know that any German writer has positively asserted the existence of this connection. But the doctrine has, at times,

¹ "Spirit of Masonry," lect. x, p. 106.

been alluded to, without any definite or strong denial of a belief in its truth.

Thus Carl Michaeler, the author of a *Treatise on the Phœnician Mysteries*, has written some observations on the subject in an article published by him late in the 18th century, in the *Vienna Journal für Freimaurer*, on the analogy between the Christianity of the early times and Freemasonry. In this essay he refers to the theory of the Gnostic origin of Freemasonry. He is, however, very guarded in his conclusions, and says conditionally that, if there is any connection between the two, it must be traced to the Gnosticism of Clement of Alexandria, and on which simply as a school of philosophy and history it may have been founded, while the differences between the two now existing must be credited to changes of human conception in the centuries that have since gone by.

But, in fact, the Gnosticism of Clement was something entirely different from that of Basilides, to whom Hutchinson and King say is due the origin of our symbols, and whom Clement vigorously opposed in his works. It was what he himself calls it, "a true gnosis or Christian philosophy on the basis of faith." It was that higher knowledge, or more perfect state of Christian faith, to which St. Paul is supposed to refer when he says, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, that he made known to those who were perfect a higher wisdom.

Righellini speaks more positively. He says that the symbols and doctrines of the Ophites, who were a Gnostic sect, passed over into Europe, having been adapted by the Crusaders, the Rosicrucians, and the Templars, and finally reached the Freemasons.¹

Lastly, we may refer to the Leland MS., the author of which distinctly brought this doctrine to the public view, by asserting that the Freemasons were acquainted with the "facultye of Abrac," by which phrase he refers to the most prominent and distinctive of the Gnostic symbols. That the writer of this very curious document should thus have intimated the existence of a connection between Gnosticism and Freemasonry would lead us to infer that the idea of such a connection was not wholly unfa-

¹ "Maçonnerie considérée comme le résultat des Relig. Egypt. Juive et Chrétienne," tome i, p. 291.

miliar to the Masonic mind at that period. Such an inference will be strengthened by the passage already quoted from the pamphlet in the Rawlinson collection, a treatise which was published about a quarter of a century before.

But before we can enter into a proper discussion of this important question, it will be wise for the sake of the general reader that something should be said of the Gnostics and of the philosophical and religious system which they professed.

We propose, therefore, very briefly to reply to the questions: "What is Gnosticism?" and "Who were the Gnostics?"

Scarcely had the light of Christianity dawned upon the world before a host of heresies sprang up to disturb the new religion. Among them, Gnosticism held the most important position. The title of the sect is derived from the Greek word *γνῶσις* (gnosis), "wisdom" or "knowledge." This name was adopted in a spirit of pride, to intimate that the disciples of the sect were in possession of a higher degree of spiritual wisdom than was to be reached by those who had not been initiated into their mysteries.

At so early a period did the heresy of Gnosticism arise in the Christian Church, that we find the Apostle Paul warning the converts to the new faith of such blemishes on the pure doctrine of Christ. He tells his disciple Timothy to avoid "profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called."¹ The translators of the authorized version have so rendered the passage. But, in view of the greater light that has since their day been thrown upon the religious history and spirit of the period of the Apostles, and the real nature of the Gnostic element which disturbed it, Brother Mackey was of the opinion that we may better preserve the true sense of the original Greek by translating the words as "oppositions of the false gnosis."

There were then two kinds of *Gnosis*, or Gnosticism — the true and the false. This is a distinction which St. Paul himself makes in a passage in his Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he speaks of the wisdom which he taught and gave to the perfect, as opposed to the wisdom of the world.²

¹ Timothy, VI, 20.

² "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." 1 Corinthians, II, 6-7.

Clement declared himself to be a follower of this true Gnosticism. With it and Freemasonry there can be no connection, except that slender one admitted by Michaeler, and relating only to the search and study of philosophical and historical truth. The false *Gnosis* to which the Apostle refers is the subject of our present inquiry.

When John the Baptist was preaching in the Wilderness, and for some time before, there were many old philosophical and religious systems which, coming from the East, had the mystical character peculiar to the Oriental mind. These various systems were then, because of the better communication between different nations following the conquests of Alexander of Macedon, beginning to borrow from each other. The disciples of Plato were taking some of the doctrines of the Eastern Magi. These in turn were becoming more or less influenced with the philosophy of Greece. Traditions of India, Persia, Egypt, Chaldea, Judea, Greece, and Rome were mingling in one mass, and forming out of the mixture a mystical philosophy and religion which partook of the elements out of which it was composed, and yet contained within its bosom a mysticism peculiar to itself.

This new system was Gnosticism. This took its leading doctrines from Plato, from the Zend-Avesta, the Cabala, the Vedas, and the hieroglyphs of Egypt. It taught as articles of faith the existence of a Supreme Being, invisible, inaccessible, and incomprehensible, who was the creator of a spiritual world consisting of divine intelligences called *æons*, emanating from him, and of matter which was eternal, the source of evil and the antagonist of the Supreme Being. One of these *æons*, the lowest of all, called the Demiurge, created the world out of matter, which, though eternal, was inert and formless.

The Supreme Father, or First Principle of all things, had dwelt from all eternity in a *pleroma*, or fullness of inaccessible light, and hence He was called *Bythos*, or the Abyss, meaning the deep nature of His perfections was beyond measure. "This Being," says Dr. Burton, in his explanation of the Gnostic system, in the *Bampton Lectures*, "by an operation purely mental, or by acting upon himself, produced two other beings of different sexes, from whom by a series of descents, more or less numerous according to different schemes, several pairs of beings were formed,

who were called *æons*, from the periods of their existence before time was, or *emanations* from the mode of their production. These successive *æons* or *emanations* appear to have been inferior each to the preceding; and their existence was indispensable to the Gnostic scheme, that they might account for the creation of the world, without making God the Author of evil. These *æons* lived through countless ages with their first Father. But the system of *emanations* seems to have resembled that of concentric circles, and they gradually deteriorated as they approached nearer and nearer to the extremity of the *pleroma*. Beyond this *pleroma* was matter, inert and powerless, though co-eternal with the Supreme God, and like Him without beginning. At length one of the *æons* (the Demiurge) passed the limits of the *pleroma*, and, meeting with matter, created the world after the form and model of an ideal world, which existed in the *pleroma* or the mind of the Supreme God."

We need not enter into a minute study of the other points of doctrine which grew out of these three. Sufficient is it to say that the old Gnosticism was not an original system, but was really a religion and a philosophy made up of portions of the older Grecian and Oriental systems, including the Platonism of the Greeks, the Parseeism of the Persians, and the Cabala of the Jews.

The coming of Christianity found this old Gnosticism spread in Asia and in Egypt. Some of its disciples became converts to the new religion. They brought with them into its fold many of the mystical views of their Gnostic philosophy and sought to apply them to the pure and simple doctrines of the Gospel.

Thus it happened that the name of Gnosticism was applied to a great variety of schools, differing from each other in the way they explained the Christian faith. Yet having one common principle of unity, they placed themselves somewhat in opposition to the understanding of Christianity as it was generally received by its disciples. They deemed the common view of Christianity insufficient to afford any absolute truth. Therefore they claimed for themselves the possession of an amount of knowledge higher than that of ordinary believers.¹

¹ See the excellent article on Gnosticism in Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible." Scribners, 1914. Note also the second chapter of the "Epistle to the Colossians." This has been understood as an argument and warning against the Gnostic philosophy.

"They seldom pretended," says the Rev. Dr. Wing, "to demonstrate the principles on which their systems were founded by historical evidence or logical reasonings, since they rather boasted that these were discovered by the intuitional powers of more highly endowed minds, and that the materials thus obtained, whether through faith or divine revelation, were then worked up into a scientific form, according to each one's natural power and culture. Their aim was to construct, not merely a theory of redemption, but of the universe — a cosmogony. No subject was beyond their investigations. Whatever God could reveal to the finite intellect they looked upon as within their range. What to others seemed only speculative ideas, were by them hypostatized or personified into real beings or historical facts. It was in this way that they constructed systems of speculation on subjects entirely beyond the range of human knowledge, which startle us by their boldness and their apparent consciousness of reality."¹

Such was the Gnosticism whose various sects intruded with their mystical notions and their allegorical ideas into the Church, before Christianity had been well established. Although named and denounced by St. Paul as "vain babblers," they gained in strength and gave rise to many heresies lasting until the 4th century.

The most important of these sects, and the one from which the moderns have got most of their views of Christian Gnosticism, was established in the 2d century by Basilides, the chief of the Egyptian Gnostics. The doctrine of the Basilideans grew from the original Gnostic system. It was more particularly distinguished by the adoption from Pythagoras of the doctrine of numbers and its use of the word *Abrazas* — that which, according to the Leland MS., so greatly puzzled the learned Mr. Locke.

The system of Basilides held that the Supreme God was beyond understanding and ineffable. Unfolded from his perfection were seven attributes, personal qualities, or rather personified powers, namely, *Mind, Reason, Thought, Wisdom, Power, Holiness, and Peace*. Seven was a sacred number, and these seven powers referred to the seven days of the week. Basilides also supposed that there were seven similar beings in every stage or region of the spiritual world. These regions were three hundred and sixty-five in number, corresponding to the days in the solar

¹ Strong and McClintock's "Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature."

year. These three hundred and sixty-five regions were so many spiritual mansions between the earth and heaven, and he supposed the existence of an equal number of angels. The number three hundred and sixty-five was holy in the Basilidean system. He worked out the word $\Lambda \text{ B R A X A S}$, because these letters in Greek have the numerical value, when added together, of three hundred and sixty-five. The German theologian, Bellermann, thinks he has found the meaning in the Captu, or old Egyptian language, where the words *abrah*, "word," and *sadsch*, "blessed," "holy," or "adorable," and therefore *abrahsadsch*, easily made into the Greek *Abraxas*, meant "the holy, blessed, or adorable Word," thus coming close to the spirit of the Jewish Cabalists in their similar use of a Holy Name.

Whether the word was thus invented by Basilides, on account of the numerical value of its letters, is uncertain. He, however, applied it in his system as the name of the Supreme God.

This word *Abraxas*, like the *Tetragrammaton*¹ of the Jews, became of great importance to the Basilideans. Their reverence for it gave origin to what are called "abraxas gems." These are gems, plates, or tablets of metal, discovered principally in Egypt, but also found in France and Spain. They are inscribed with the word *Abraxas* and an image supposed to refer to the Basilidean god. Some of these have on them Jewish words, such as *Jehovah* or *Adonai*, and others have Persian, Egyptian, or Grecian symbols.

Montfauçon, who has treated the subject of "abraxas gems" at length, divides them into seven classes: 1. Those inscribed with the head of a cock as a symbol of the sun. 2. Those having the head of a lion, to denote the heat of the sun, and the word *Mithras*. 3. Those having the image of the Egyptian god *Serapis*. 4. Those showing sphinxes, apes, and other animals. 5. Those having human figures with the words *Iao*, *Sabaoth*, *Adonai*, etc. 6. Those having inscriptions without figures. 7. Those having forms of monsters.

From these gems we take our knowledge of the Gnostic or Basilidean symbols, which are said to have furnished ideas to the

¹ This expression, from the Greek words *tetters* or "four", and *gramma* or "letter," is used for the four consonants of the sacred name YHWH, which the orthodox read as "Adonai" because of a very literal understanding of the Third Commandment.

builders of the Middle Ages in their decorative art, and which Mr. King and some other writers have assumed to be handed on to the Freemasons.

The leading Gnostic symbol is that of the Supreme God, *Abraxas*. This is represented as a human figure with the head of a rooster, the legs being two serpents. He has a sword in one hand (sometimes a whip) and a shield in the other.

The serpent is also a very common symbol, having sometimes the head of a rooster, or a lion, or of a hawk. Other symbols, known to be of a purely Gnostic or Basilidean origin, from the inscription, *Abraxas*, or *Iao*, or both, are *Horus*, or the Sun, seated on a lotus flower, supported by a double lamp, composed of two phallic images joined at their bases; the dog; the raven; the tau cross having over it a human head; the Egyptian god, *Anubis*; and Father *Nilus*, stooping and holding in his hand the double, phallic lamp of *Horus*. This last symbol is curious because the word *Heilos*, like *Mithras*, which is also a Gnostic symbol, and *Abraxas*, expresses, in the value of the Greek letters, the number three hundred and sixty-five.

All these symbols, it will be seen, make some reference to the sun, either as the representative of the Supreme God or as the source of light. They lead to the belief that in the later Gnosticism, as in the Mithraic Mysteries, there was sunworship, one of the earliest and most extensive of the primitive religions. Evidently in both Gnostic and Mithraic symbolism the sun plays a very important part.

Architects and builders of the Middle Ages may have borrowed, and probably did borrow, some suggestions from the Gnostics in carrying out the symbolism of their art. But it is not probable, from their church organization and their religious character, that they would be more than mere suggestions. Certainly they were not accepted by these orthodox Christians with anything of their real Gnostic meaning.

We may apply to the use of Gnostic symbols by the architects of the Middle Ages the remarks made by Frederick Apthorp Paley on the adoption of certain Pagan symbols by the same builders. Their Gnostic origin was a mere accident. They were employed not as the symbolism of any Gnostic doctrine, but in the spirit of Christianity, and "The Church, in perfecting

their development, stamped them with a purer and sublimer character."¹

Comparing these Gnostic symbols with those of ours, we are led to reject the opinion of Hutchinson, that "The Basilidean system of religion furnished Freemasonry with some tenets, principles, and hieroglyphics." As Freemasons we refuse the "tenets and principles" of the sect condemned by Clement and by Irenæus. As to its "hieroglyphics," meaning its symbols, we look in vain for anything like them in Speculative Freemasonry.

That the Freemasons at a very early period tended to the doctrine of sacred numbers, which has been largely developed in the Freemasonry of the modern High Degrees, is true. But this symbolism came directly from the teachings of Pythagoras, with which the compilers of the primitive rituals were familiar.

That the sun and the moon are briefly referred to in rituals and may be deemed in some sort Masonic symbols, is also true. But the use made of this symbolism, and the meaning of it, very clearly proves that it has not been taken from a Gnostic source.

The doctrine of the *metempsychosis*, transfer of the soul from one body to another, taught by the Basilideans, is another point widely separating Freemasonry from Gnosticism, the dogma of the resurrection being almost the foundation-stone on which the whole religious philosophy of the former is built.

G. W. King seeks to connect Freemasonry and Gnosticism through a line of argument which only goes to prove his absolute and perhaps his pardonable misuse of Masonic history. Only careful research, quickened by active Masonic membership, enables a student to avoid the errors into which King falls.

"The foregoing considerations," he says, "seem to afford a rational explanation of the manner in which the genuine Gnostic symbols (whether still retaining any mystic meaning or kept as mere lifeless forms, let the Order declare) have come down to these times, still paraded as things holy and of deep significance. Treasured up amongst the dark sectaries of the Lebanon and the Sofis of Persia, communicated to the Templars, and transmitted to their heirs, the Brethren of the Rosy Cross, they have kept up an unbroken existence."²

¹"Manual of Gothic Architecture," p. 4, London, 1846.

²"The Gnostics and Their Remains," p. 191.

The line of history King pursues, presents a mere jumble of unrelated ideas. He mixes up the old Rosicrucians with the more modern Rose Croix, while the only relation is found in the similarity of name. If he meant the former, he fails to show a relation between them and the Freemasons; if the latter, he did not know that there is not a Gnostic symbol in their system, which is wholly made from the church symbolism.

Finally, he says, "Thus those symbols, in their origin, embodying the highest mysteries of Indian theosophy, afterward eagerly embraced by the subtle genius of the Alexandrian Greeks, and combined by them with the hidden wisdom of Egypt, in whose captivating and profound doctrines the few bright spirits of the Middle Ages sought a refuge from the childish fables then constituting orthodoxy, engendered by monkery upon the primal Buddhistic stock; these sacred symbols exist even now, but serve merely for the insignia of what at best is but a charitable, probably nothing more in its present form than a convivial institution."

These last lines indicate the precise amount of knowledge that he had of the purpose and plan of Freemasonry. We regret that he has not tried to tell us how it was that "what at best is but a charitable, and probably nothing more than a convivial institution" has had the use of the symbols of a profound theosophy. Benevolent societies and convivial clubs do not, as a rule, meddle with such matters. But that problem belongs to him and his followers. Freemasons need not undertake the needless labor of searching for that which we are sure can not be found.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

THE SOCINIANS AND FREEMASONRY



WHILE some of the enemies of Freemasonry have pretended that its origin is to be found in the efforts of the Jesuits, who sought to effect certain religious and political objects through the influence of such a society, one foe, at least, has endeavored to trace its first rise to the Socinians, who sprang up as a religious sect in Italy about the middle of the 16th century and gave rise to much discussion.

This hypothesis is of so unhistorical a character that it merits only a passing notice in the legendary story of the institution. It was first circulated by the Abbé Le Franc, the Superior of the House of the Eudists, at Caën, France, in a book published by him in the year 1791, under the title of *Le Voile levé pour les Curieux, ou le Secret des Révolutions, révélé à l'aide de la Franc-Maçonnerie*; that is, "The Veil lifted for the Inquisitive, or the Secret of Revolutions, revealed by the assistance of Freemasonry." This work was thought of so much importance that it was translated during the following year into Italian.

Le Franc, as a loyal Roman Catholic official, hating both the Freemasons and the Socinians, readily seized the idea, or at all events advanced it in this essay, that the former came from the latter, whose origin he assigns to the year 1546.

He repeats, only to deny, all the other theories that have been submitted on the subject, such as that the origin of the institution is to be sought in the fraternities of Operative Freemasons of the Middle Ages, or in the assembly held at York under the protection of King Athelstane, or in the builders of King Solomon's Temple, or in the Ancient Mysteries of Egypt.

Each of these theories he refuses to admit as true. On the contrary, Le Franc says the Order can not be traced beyond the

famous meeting of Socinians,¹ held at the city of Vicenza, Italy, in the year 1546, by Lælius Socinus, Ochirius Gentilis, and others. These reformers there and then established a sect denying the doctrine of the Trinity.

To Faustus Socinus, the nephew of Lælius, he asserts, that the real foundation of Freemasonry as a secret and symbolical society is to be credited. This "artful and indefatigable sectary," or a tireless bigot, as he calls him, having seen the burning of Servetus at Geneva by Calvin, for maintaining only a part of the system that he advocated, and finding that both Roman Catholics and Protestants were equally foes to his views, is said to have concealed it under symbols and mysterious ceremonies, accompanied by oaths of secrecy. Le Franc holds that this was done in order that, while this was publicly taught to the people in countries where it was tolerated, it might be gradually and safely brought secretly into other states where an open confession of it would probably lead its preachers to the stake for a like death by burning.

The spread of this system, he further says, was veiled under the puzzling allegory of building a temple whose extent, in the very words of Freemasonry, was to be "in length from the east to the west, and in breadth from north to south." The professors of it were therefore furnished, so as to carry out the allegory, with the various tools used in building, such as the square, the compasses, the level, and the plumb.

Here it is that the Abbé Le Franc has found the first form and beginning of the Masonic institution as it existed at the time of his writing. So far as we are able to learn, Le Franc is the sole inventor of this theory. Righellini credits it to three distinct writers, the author of the *Voile levé*, Le Franc, and the Abbé Barruel. But in fact the first and second of these are identical. Barruel has not made any allusion to it in his *History of Jacobinism*. He traces the origin of Freemasonry to the Manicheans,²

¹ Socinianism is akin to but not exactly the same as Unitarianism. Founded by Lelio Sozini, born 1525, died 1562, and built up by Fausto Sozini, born 1559, died 1604 (the two being related as uncle and nephew), the sect is peculiar in holding that Trinitarianism is wrong, yet the birth of Christ was miraculous and that He had divine qualities.

² The followers of a Persian, named Mani, A.D. 216, who taught that good and evil were equal powers in the world, that the first man was a product of Satan though having light from God, that Jesus was not a man, etc. This religion spread freely in Asia and was active for several centuries.

and makes a long and learned comparison of the usages and ceremonies of the two, to show how much the one is due to the other.

Righellini, commenting on this theory of the Abbé Le Franc, says that all that is true in it is that there was about the middle of the 16th century, a learned society of philosophers and literary men at Vicenza, who discussed the theological questions then dividing Europe, and particularly Germany. The members of this celebrated academy, he says, looked upon all difficulties concerning the mysteries of the Christian religion as points of doctrine belonging simply to the philosophy of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Christians, and having no relation whatever to the dogmas of faith.¹

Considering that out of these meetings of the philosophers at Vicenza came a religious sect, whose views present a very important change of the orthodox creeds, we may well suppose that Righellini is as much in error in his comments as Le Franc has been in his text.

The society meeting at Vicenza and at Venice sought to conceal its new and heterodox doctrines under a veil of secrecy. But it soon became exposed to the view of the Papal court, through whose influence the members were expelled from the Venetian republic, some of them seeking safety in Germany, but most of them in Poland, where their doctrines were not only tolerated, but in time became popular. Flourishing branches were established at Cracow, Lublin, and various other places in Poland and Lithuania.

Lælius Socinus, soon after his followers, went into Poland; then to Zurich, Switzerland, where he died. He was succeeded by Faustus Socinus who modified the doctrines of his uncle, and may be considered the real founder of the Socinian sect of Christians.

Now, authentic history furnishes some simple facts. In the 16th century secret societies were not rare in various countries of Europe. In Italy especially many were to be found. Some of these groups were founded for philosophical studies, some for the pursuit of alchemy, some for theological discussions, and others were of mere social character. All of them, however, shut out the vulgar, the illiterate, or the profane.

¹ Righellini, "La Maçonnerie," tome iii, p. 60.

Thus there was founded at Florence a club called the "Società della Cucchiara," or the *Society of the Trowel*. The name and the symbols used, the trowel, the hammer, the square, and the level, led both Lenning and Righellini to believe it was a Masonic association. But the account given of it by Vasari,¹ in his *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, 1550, shows that it was merely a social club of Florentine artists. He says that it took its existence and its name from the accidental circumstance that certain painters and sculptors dining together once upon a time, in a garden, discovered, not far from their table, a heap of mortar in which a trowel was sticking. Owing to a spirit of fun, they began to throw the mortar on each other, and to call for the trowel to scrape it off. In the same sportive humor they resolved to form a society which should annually thereafter dine together, and to mark the laughable event which inspired their association, they called it the Society of the Trowel, and adopted as emblems certain tools used in bricklaying.

Every city in Italy where science was studied had its academy. Many of these, like the Platonic Academy, established at Florence, 1540, held their sessions in secret, and admitted none but members to take part in their mystical studies. The secret societies of the Alchemists abounded in Germany. These spread into France and England. To borrow the language of a modern writer, mystical ideas ran riot, everything was symbolized, and metaphors spread into allegories.²

It is a matter of historical record that in 1546 there was a society of about forty persons, noted for their learning, who, in the words of Mosheim,³ "held secret assemblies, at different times, in the territory of Venice, and particularly at Vicenza, in which they deliberated concerning a general reformation of the received systems of religion, and, in a more especial manner, undertook to refute the peculiar doctrines that were afterwards publicly rejected by the Socinians."

Mosheim, rigorous in applying approved tests of criticism to historical questions, says further: "Many circumstances and relations sufficiently prove that immediately after the reformation

¹ Giorgio Vasari, Italian painter and historian, born 1511, died 1574.

² Vaughan, "Hours with the Mystics," I, p. 119.

³ "Ecclesiastical History, XVI. Century," Part III, chap. iv.

had taken place in Germany, secret assemblies were held and measures proposed in several provinces that were still under the jurisdiction of Rome, with a view to combat the errors and superstitions of the times."

Such was the secret society at Vicenza, to which Le Franc credits the origin of Freemasonry, an assembly of men of advanced thought, compelled to hold their meetings in secret because the intolerance of the Church and the jealous caution of the State did not allow the free discussion of opinions contrary to the common sentiments of the period.

The further attempt to connect the doctrines of Socinus with those of Freemasonry, because, when speaking of the new religion which he was laboring to establish, he compared it to the building of a new temple, in which his disciples were to be diligent workers, is useless. The writing of such expressions is due merely to a figure of speech used in a spirit common to authors of every age. The same metaphor is used repeatedly by St. Paul in his various Epistles, and it is probable that from him Socinus borrowed the idea.

We find no historical evidence to support the theory that the Socinians founded Freemasonry. At the very time when their leader was establishing the sect whose distinctive feature was its denial of the dogma of the Trinity, the manuscript constitutions of the Freemasons were beginning their *Legend of the Craft*, with praise to "the Might of the Father, the Wisdom of the Glorious Son, and the Goodness of the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God." No two institutions at that very time could have been more unlike. That one was born of the other is out of the question.

CHAPTER FORTY

FREEMASONRY AND THE ESSENES



AWRIE — or, for reasons already given, perhaps we should say Brewster — was probably the first to assert the existence of a connection between the Freemasons and the Jewish sect of the Essenes, a doctrine announced in his *History of Freemasonry*. He does not, indeed, trace the origin of the Masonic institution to the Essenes, but only makes them the successors of the Freemasons of the Temple, whose forms and tenets they gave to Pythagoras and his school at Crotona, by whom the art was spread throughout Europe.

Believing as he did in the theory that Freemasonry was first organized at the Temple of Solomon by a union of the Jewish workmen with the association of Dionysian Artificers—a theory discussed in a preceding chapter — the editor of Lawrie's *History* meets with a gap in the regular and constant progress of the Order which requires to be filled up. The ingenious mode in which he accomplishes this task may be best explained in his own words:

“To these opinions it may be objected, that if the Fraternity of Freemasons flourished during the reign of Solomon, it would have existed in Judea in after ages, and attracted the notice of sacred or profane historians. Whether or not this objection is well founded, we shall not pretend to determine; but if it can be shown that there did exist, after the building of the temple, an association of men resembling Freemasons, in the nature, ceremonies, and object of their institution, the force of the objection will not only be taken away, but additional strength will be communicated to the opinion which we have been supporting. The association here alluded to is that of the Essenes, whose origin and sentiments have occasioned much discussion among eccle-

siastical historians. They are all, however, of one mind concerning the constitution and observances of this religious order."¹

The peace-making quality of an "if" is here very plain. "If it can be shown" that there is an orderly, accurate showing in the dated events from the builders of the Temple to the Essenes, and that there is a likeness of both to the Freemasons in "the nature, ceremonies, and object of their institution," the conclusion at which Brewster arrived will be better upheld than it would be if these claims are denied or not proved.

The course of argument must therefore be directed to these points.

In the first place we must inquire, "Who were the Essenes and what was their history?" This subject has already been treated to some extent in a previous portion of this work. But the present argument will require and excuse the need of a repetition.

The three sects into which the Jews were divided in the time of Christ were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. Of these, while the Saviour makes repeated mention of the first two, he never refers in the remotest manner to the third. This singular silence of Jesus has been explained by some imaginative Masonic writers, such, for instance, as Clavel, by asserting that he was probably an initiate of the sect. But scholars have been divided on this subject, some supposing that it is due to the fact (which, however, has not been established) that the Essenes originated in Egypt at a later period; others, that they were not an independent sect, but only an order or subdivision of Pharisaism. However, in connection with the present argument, the settlement of this question is of no material importance.

The Essenes were an association of self-denying unmarried persons whose numbers were therefore recruited from the children of the Jewish community in which they lived. These were carefully trained by proper instructions for admission into the society. The reception into the inner body of the society and to the possession of its mystical doctrine was only attained after a long training through three stages or degrees, the last of which make the candidate a party in the full fellowship of the community.

The history of the Essenes has been written by ancient and modern authors, from Philo and Josephus to Ginsburg. An

¹ Lawrie's "History of Freemasonry," p. 33.

inquirer can be at no loss for a knowledge of the sect. The Masonic student will find the subject discussed in the Mackey-Hughan-Hawkins' *Encyclopædia of Freemasonry*, and may be referred to the able articles in James Hastings' (Scribners) *Dictionary of the Bible* and to McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*. We, in fairness to the theory, will quote the brief but sufficient account given by Lawrie's *History*. It is in the main correct and sustained by other authorities, except a few references to be credited to the natural inclination of every theorist to adapt facts to favor his beliefs. A few comments will be necessary to correct some evident errors.

"When a candidate was proposed for admission, the strictest scrutiny was made into his character. If his life had been hitherto exemplary, and if he appeared capable of curbing his passions and regulating his conduct according to the virtuous though austere maxims of their order, he was presented, at the expiration of his novitiate, with a white garment, as an emblem of the regularity of his conduct and the purity of his heart."

It was not at the end, but at the beginning of the novitiate or training, that the white garment or robe was presented, and with it went the gift of an apron and a spade.

"A solemn oath was then administered to him that he would never divulge the mysteries of the Order; that he would make no innovations on the doctrines of the society; and that he would continue in that honorable course of piety and virtue which he had begun to pursue."

This is a mere abstract of the oath, which is given at length by Josephus. It was not, however, administered until the candidate had passed through all the degrees or stages, and was ready to be admitted into full fellowship.

"Like Freemasons, they instructed the young member in the knowledge which they derived from their ancestors."

He might have said "like all other sects," in which the instruction of the young member is a duty not to be neglected.

"They admitted no women into their Order."

Though this is intended by the editor to show a point of identity with Freemasonry, it does no such thing. Such is the common rule of many associations. It distinguishes the Essenes from

other religious sects, but it by no means essentially likens them to the Freemasons.

"They had particular signs for recognizing each other, which have a strong resemblance to those of Freemasons."

This is a mere guess. That they had signs for mutual recognition is probable, because such has been in all ages the custom of secret societies. We have classical authority that they were employed in the ancient Pagan Mysteries. But there is no authority for saying that these signs of the Essenes bore any resemblance to those of the Freemasons. The only allusion to this subject is in the treatise of Philo Judæus, *De Vita Contemplativa*, where that author says that "The Essenes meet together in an assembly and the right hand is laid upon the part between the chin and the breast, while the left hand hangs straight by the side." But Philo does not say that it was used as a sign of recognition. He rather speaks of it as an attitude or posture assumed in their assemblies. Of the resemblance every Freemason can judge for himself.

"They had colleges, or places of retirement, where they resorted to practice their rites, and settle the affairs of the society; and after the performance of these duties, they assembled in a large hall, where an entertainment was provided for them by the president, or master, of the college, who allotted a certain quantity of provisions to every individual."

This was the common meal, not partaken on set occasions and in a particular place, as the writer suggests, but every day, in their usual house and at the close of daily labor.

"They abolished all distinctions of rank; and if preference was ever given, it was given to piety, liberality, and virtue. Treasurers were appointed in every town to supply the wants of indigent strangers. The Essenes pretended to higher degrees of piety and knowledge than the uneducated vulgar, and though their pretensions were high, they were never questioned by their enemies. Austerity of manners was one of the chief characteristics of the Essenian Fraternity. They frequently assembled, however, in convivial parties, and relieved for a while the severity of those duties which they were accustomed to perform."

Concluding this description of the religious sect, the writer of Lawrie's *History* says that "this remarkable coincidence between the chief features of the Masonic and Essenian Fraternities can

be accounted for only by referring them to the same origin." Another, and, perhaps, a better reason to account for these coincidences will be hereafter presented.

Admitting that there is a resemblance in some points of the two institutions to each other, such as their secrecy, their classification into different degrees, there is no evidence that the Essenian initiation had any form except that of a mere passage from a lower to a higher grade. Of course there is their encouragement of fraternal love, but resemblances may be found in many other secret associations. We fail to see the identity "in the nature, the object, and the external forms of the two institutions" which Brewster claims. On the contrary, there is a total lack of likeness in each of these points.

The nature of the Essenian institution was that of a narrow religious sect, and in so far has certainly no resemblance to Freemasonry.

The object of the Essenes was to preserve in its most rigid requirements the observance of the Mosaic law; that of Freemasonry is to spread the tolerant principles of a universal religion, which men of every sect and creed may approve.

As to the outward form of the two institutions, what little we know of those of the Essenes certainly does not exhibit any other appearance than that which is common to all secret associations, whatever may be their nature and objects.

But the most fatal objection to the theory of a connection between Freemasonry and the Essenes, a belief maintained by the author of Lawrie's *History*, has been admitted with some candor by himself.

"There is one point, however," he says, "which may, at first sight, seem to militate against this supposition. The Essenes appear in no respects connected with architecture; nor addicted to those sciences and pursuits which are subsidiary to the art of building."

This objection, it seems to us, is fatal to the theory making the Essenes the successors of the builders of Solomon's Temple and the forerunners of the Operative Freemasons of the Middle Ages, out of whom sprang the Speculative Freemasons of the 18th century. Admitting for a moment the reality of the organization of Freemasonry at the building of the Temple in Jerusalem,



any chain linking that body of builders with the Freemasonry of the present day must show the presence and the continuance of pursuits and ideas connected with the Operative art of building. Even the Speculative Freemasons of the present day have not disturbed that chain. Though the fraternity is not now composed, necessarily, of architects and builders, yet the ideas and pursuits of those professions are retained in the speculative science, all of whose symbolism is founded on the Operative art.

The Essenes were not even Speculative Freemasons. Their symbolism, if they had any, was not founded on nor had any reference to the art of building. The apron they presented to a new member was intended to be used, according to their practice, in baptism and in bathing; and the spade had no symbolic meaning, but was simply intended for very practical purposes, the digging of earth, not as an emblem of studious research.

The defense made by the author of the *History*, that in modern times there are "many associations of Freemasons where no architects are members, and which have no connection with the art of building," hardly needs a reply. There never has been an association of Freemasons, either Operative or Speculative, which did not have a connection with the art of building, in the former case practically, in the latter symbolically. It is absurd to suppose that between these two classes there was an institution which neither practically nor symbolically cultivated the art on which the very existence of Freemasonry in either condition is based.

Another objection, equally as fatal to the theory which makes the Essenes the uninterrupted successors of the Temple builders, is to be found in the correct order of the facts of history. If this succession is broken by any interval, the chain connecting the two institutions is broken, and the theory falls to the ground.

The Temple of Solomon was finished about a thousand years before the Christian era. According to the Masonic legends, the builders engaged in its construction immediately "broke ranks" and traveled into foreign countries to spread the art which they had there learned. This, though merely a legend, is not at all improbable. It is very likely that the Tyrian workmen, at least (and they were the larger number of those employed in the building), returned to their homes after the tasks for which they had

been sent to Solomon, by the King of Tyre, had been finished. If there were any Jewish Freemasons at all, who were not mere laborers, it is reasonable to suppose that they would seek employment elsewhere, in the art of building they had acquired from their Tyrian masters. This is a fair understanding of the tradition.

Who, then, were left to continue the fraternity? Brewster, in Lawrie's *History*, and Oliver, in his *Antiquities*, affirm that it was the Essenes. But we do not hear of this sect as an organized body until eight centuries afterward. The raw claim of Pliny, that they had been in being for thousands of years — "*per seculorum millia*" — has met with no welcome from scholars. It is something which is beyond belief; and Pliny is no authority in Jewish affairs.

Josephus speaks of the Essenes, as existing in the days of Jonathan the Maccabæan; but this was only 143 years before Christ. They are never mentioned in any of the books of the Old Testament, written later than the building of the Temple, and the silence of the Saviour and the Apostles concerning them has been credited to the fact that they were not even at that time an organized body, but merely a branch of the Pharisees. The Rabbi Nathan plainly says that "those Pharisees who live in a state of celibacy are Essenes"; and McClintock takes from various authorities fourteen points of resemblance, which are given to show the identity in the most important usages of the two institutions. At all events, we have no historic evidence of the existence of the Essenes as a distinct organization before the war of the Maccabees. This would separate them by eight centuries from the builders of Solomon's Temple, of whom the theory under review mistakenly supposes them to be the direct heirs.

But Brewster¹ seeks to connect the Essenes and the builders of Solomon through the Assideans, whom he also calls "An order of the KNIGHTS OF THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM, who bound themselves to adorn the porches of that magnificent structure and to preserve it from injury and decay." He adds that "This association was composed of the greatest men of Israel, who were distinguished for their charitable and peaceful dispositions; and always signalized themselves by their ardent zeal for the purity

¹ Brother Mackey says the unfairness of the author of Lawrie's "History" is apparent when he quotes the "*Histoire des Juifs*," by Basnage, as authority for the existence of the Essenes three hundred years before the Christian era. Basnage actually says that they existed in the reign of Antigonus, but this was only 105 B.C.

and preservation of the temple." Therefore, he argues that "The Essenes were not only an ancient fraternity, but that they originated from an association of architects who were connected with the building of Solomon's temple." All this is ingenious, but it is untrue. It is, however, the style, now nearly out of favor it is to be hoped, in which some Masonic history has been written.

The Assideans are not mentioned by the canonical writers of the Scriptures, nor by Josephus. The word first occurs in the Book of Maccabees. It is applied, not, as Brewster calls them, to men of "peaceful dispositions," but to a body of devoted and warlike heroes and patriots who, as Kitto says, rose at the signal for armed resistance given by Mattathias, the father of the Maccabees. Under him and his successors, they upheld with the sword the great doctrine of the unity of God, and stemmed the rising tide of Grecian manners and idol worship. The era of the Assideans, like that of the Essenes, is removed eight centuries from the time of the building of the Solomonic Temple.

Scaliger, who is cited in Lawrie's *History* as authority, only says that the Assideans were a fraternity of Jews whose principal devotion consisted in keeping up the edifices belonging to the Temple. Not content with paying the common tribute of half a shekel a head, appointed for Temple repairs, they willingly put upon themselves an extra tax.

But as they are not known to have come into existence until the wars of the Maccabees, it is evident that the Temple to which they devoted their care must have been the second one, built after the return of the Jews from their Babylonian captivity. With the Temple of Solomon and with its builders the Assideans could not have had any connection.

Prideaux says that the Jews were divided, after the captivity, into two classes — the Zadikim or righteous, who observed only the written law of Moses, and the Chasidim or pious, who super-added the traditions of the elders. These latter, he says, were the Assideans, the change of name resulting from a common alteration of the sounds of the original Hebrew letters.

But if this division took place after the captivity, a period of nearly five centuries had then elapsed since the building of Solomon's Temple, and an unbroken chain of events between that king's builders and the Essenes is not preserved.

After the founding of the Christian religion we lose sight of the Essenes. Some of them are said to have gone to Egypt, and thereto have founded the ascetic sect of Therapeutists. Others are believed to have been among the first converts to Christianity, but in a short time, in the 2nd century, they faded out of notice. From what has been said, there can be no doubt in holding the theory of the descent of Freemasonry to modern times through the Assideans and the Essenes to be wholly unsound and unsupported by historical testimony.

In relation to what has been called the "remarkable coincidences" to be met with in the doctrines and usages of this Jewish sect and the Freemasons, giving to them all the weight demanded, the rational explanation appears to be such as we have elsewhere given, and which we may repeat here.

The truth is that the Essenes and the Freemasons take whatever similarity or resemblance they may have from that spirit of brotherhood prevailing in all ages of the civilized world, the inherent principles of which, as the natural results of any fraternization, where all the members are engaged in the same pursuit and governed by one common bond of unity, are brotherly love, charity, and generally that secrecy and reserve securing to them a privacy, in the practice of their rites, from the rest of the world. Between all fraternities, ancient and modern, these "remarkable coincidences" are to be found.

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

THE LEGEND OF ENOCH



BEFORE concluding this series of essays, as they might be called, on the legendary history of Freemasonry, it will be necessary, so that we may thoroughly cover the subject, to refer to a few legends of a peculiar character, which have not yet been noticed. These form no part of the original *Legend of the Craft*. There are, however, brief allusions in that document to them; so brief as almost to attract no especial note, but which might possibly indicate that some form, perhaps a very mangled one, of these legends was familiar to the mediæval Freemasons. Perhaps, and this is more probable, they have suggested a foundation for the making of these legendary stories at a later period by the Speculative Freemasons of the 18th century.

Another possibility is that both those views are correct, and that while the imperfect and incomplete Legend was known to the Freemasons of the Middle Ages, its completed form was thereby suggested to the fraternity at a later period, and after the era of the Revival.

Whichever of these views we may accept, it is at least certain that at the present day, and in the present condition of the fraternity, these legends form an important part of the ritualism of the Order. They can not be rejected in their symbolic meaning, unless we are willing with them to throw away the whole fabric of Freemasonry, into which they have been closely woven.

Of these legends and of some lesser ones of the same class, Dr. Oliver has spoken with great fairness in his *Historical Landmarks*, in the following words:

"It is admitted that we are in possession of numerous legends which are not found in holy writ, but being of very ancient date, are entitled to consideration, although their authenticity may be

questioned and their aid rejected. I shall not, however, in any case, use their evidence as a *prima facie* means of proving any doubtful proposition, but merely in corroboration of an argument which might probably be complete without their aid. Our system of typical or legendary tradition adds to the dignity of the institution by its general reference to sublime truths, which were considered necessary to its existence or its consistency, although some of the facts, how pure soever at their first promulgation, may have been distorted and perverted by passing through a multitude of hands in their transmission down the stream of time, amidst the fluctuation of the earth and the downfall of mighty states and empires."

Without discussing the question of their great age, or of their original purity and their later misuse and mangling, we propose to present these legends to the Masonic reader. We do this because they are really not so much traditional tales of events that are supposed to have at some time occurred, but they are to be considered really as allegorical attempts to symbolize certain ethical or religious ideas, the expression of which lies at the very foundation of the Masonic system. So considered, they must be deemed of great value.

Their interest will also be much increased by a comparison of the facts of history that are interwoven with them, and to certain traditions of the ancient Oriental nations showing the existence of the same legends among them. These may, indeed, have been the foundation on which the Masonic ones have been built, the "distortion or perversion" being simply those variations necessary to connect the legendary statements more closely and consistently with the Masonic symbolic ideas.

The first of these to which our attention will be directed is the *Legend of Enoch*, the seventh of the Patriarchs, of whom Milton has said:

. . . "him the Most High,
(Rapt in a balmy cloud with winged steeds)
Did, as thou seest, receive to walk with God
High in salvation and the claims of bliss,
Exempt from death."

We shall first present the reader with the Masonic Legend, and then endeavor to trace out the idea which it was intended

to convey, by a comparison of it with historical events, with Oriental traditions of a similar nature, and with the Masonic symbolism which it seems to convey. The Legend as accepted by the Craft, from a time hereafter to be considered, runs to the following effect:

Enoch, being inspired by the Most High, and in obedience to a vision, built underground, in the bosom of Mount Moriah, a structure of nine brick vaults vertically one underneath the other and having their entrances and exits through openings left in the arch of each vault.

He then caused a three-cornered plate of gold to be made, each side of which was a cubit long; he enriched it with the most precious stones, and engraved upon it the ineffable (not to be spoken) name of God. He then fastened the plate upon a stone of agate of the same form, which he placed upon a cubical block of marble, and deposited the whole within the ninth or innermost vault.

When this underground building was completed, Enoch made a slab or door of stone, and, attaching to it a ring of iron, by which it might, if necessary, be raised, he placed it over the opening of the uppermost arch, and so covered it over with soil that the entrance could not easily be discovered. Enoch himself was not permitted to enter it more than once a year. On his death or translation, all knowledge of this building and of the sacred treasure which it contained was lost until in succeeding ages it was accidentally discovered while Solomon was engaged in building a temple above the spot on the same mountain.

The Legend proceeds to inform us that after Enoch had finished the construction of the nine vaults, fearing that the principles of the arts and sciences which he had carefully studied would be lost in that world flood of which he had received a prophetic vision, he erected above ground two pillars, one of marble, to withstand the destructive influences of fire, and one of brass to resist the action of water. On the pillar of brass he engraved the history of the creation, the principles of the arts and sciences, and the doctrines of Speculative Freemasonry as they were then practiced; and on the pillar of marble he inscribed in hieroglyphics the information that near the spot where they stood a precious treasure was laid away in a secret underground vault.

Such is the *Legend of Enoch*, which forms a very important part of the legendary history of the High Degrees. As a traditional account it has not the slightest support of authentic history, and the events that it relates do not recommend themselves by an air of probability. But, accepted as the expression of a symbolic idea, it undoubtedly possesses some value.

That part of the tradition referring to the two pillars is clearly borrowed from the old Craft Legend of Lamech's sons, which has already been treated in this work. We need not now give it further consideration.

The germ of the Legend is the preservation of the Ineffable Name through the efforts of the Patriarch. This is in fact the true symbolism of the Legend, and it is thus connected with the whole system of Freemasonry in its Speculative form.

There is no allusion to this story in the *Legend of the Craft*. None of the old manuscript Constitutions contain the name of Enoch, nor does he appear to have been deemed by the mediæval Freemasons to be one of the worthies of the Craft. The Enoch spoken of in the Cooke MS. is the son of Cain, and not the seventh Patriarch. We must conclude, therefore, that the Legend was made at a later day, and in no way suggested by anything in the original tradition of the Craft.

But that there were traditions outside of Freemasonry, which prevailed in the Middle Ages, in reference to underground caves in Mount Moriah, is evident from the writings of the old historians. Thus there was a tradition of the Talmudists that when King Solomon was building the Temple, foreseeing that at some future time the edifice would be destroyed, he caused a dark and intricate vault to be constructed underground, where the ark might be concealed whenever such a time of danger should arrive; and that Josiah, being warned by Huldah, the prophetess, of the approaching peril, caused the ark to be hidden in the crypt built by Solomon. There was also in this vault, as in that of Enoch, a cubical stone, on which the ark was placed.¹

There is a tradition also, among the Arabians, of a sacred stone found by Abraham beneath the earth, and made by him the stone of foundation of the temple which Jehovah ordered him to erect — a temple the tradition of which is confined to the Mohammedans.

¹ Lightfoot, "Prospect of the Temple," chap. xv.

But the most curious story is one told by Nicephorus Callistus, a Greek historian of the 14th century, in his *Ecclesiastical Histories*. When detailing the events that occurred while Julian the Apostate was making his attempt to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem, he tells the following fable, but of whose traditional character the monk has not the slightest notion:

"When the foundations were being laid, as has been said, one of the stones attached to the lowest part of the foundation was removed from its place and showed the mouth of a cavern which had been cut out of the rock. But as the cave could not be distinctly seen, those who had charge of the work, wishing to explore it, that they might be better acquainted with the place, sent one of the workmen down tied to a long rope. When he got to the bottom he found water up to his legs. Searching the cavern on every side, he found, by touching with his hands, that it was of a quadrangular form. When he was returning to the mouth, he discovered a certain pillar standing up scarcely above the water. Feeling with his hand, he found a little book placed upon it, and wrapped up in very fine and clean linen. Taking possession of it, he gave the signal with the rope that those who had sent him down, should draw him up. Being received above, as soon as the book was shown, all were struck with astonishment, especially as it appeared untouched and fresh notwithstanding that it had been found in so dismal and dark a place. But when the book was unfolded, not only the Jews but the Greeks were astounded. For even at the beginning it declared in large letters: IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD. To speak plainly, the writing embraced the whole Gospel which was announced in the Divine tongue of the Virgin disciple."¹

True, Enoch has been supposed to be identical with Hermes, and Kerihér says, in the *Œdipus Egyptiacus*, "Idris, among the Hebrews, has been called Enoch, among the Egyptians Osiris and Hermes, and he was the first who before the Flood had any knowledge of astronomy and geometry." But the authors of the *Legend of the Craft* were hardly likely to be acquainted with this piece of archæology. The Hermes to whom, with a very corrupt spelling, they refer as the son of Cush, was the Hermes Trismegistus, popularly known as the "Father of Wisdom."

¹ Nicephori Callisti, "Ecclesiasticæ Historiæ," tome ii, lib. x, cap. xxxiii.

Enoch is first introduced to the Craft as one of the founders of Geometry and Freemasonry, by Anderson, in the year 1723, who, in the *Constitutions* printed that year, has the following passage:

"By some vestiges of antiquity we find one of them (the offspring of Seth) prophesying of the final conflagration at the Day of Judgment, as St. Jude tells, and likewise of the general deluge for the punishment of the world. Upon which he erected his two large pillars (though some ascribe them to Seth), the one of stone and the other of brick, whereon were engraven the liberal sciences, etc. And that the stone pillar remained in Syria until the days of Vespasian, the Emperor."¹

Fifteen years afterwards, when Anderson published the second edition of the *Constitutions*, he repeated the Legend, with the further claim that Enoch was "expert and bright both in the science and the art" of Geometry and Freemasonry, an account of which he placed on the pillars he had erected. He adds that "the old Masons firmly believed this tradition." But as there is no appearance of any such tradition in the old records, of which since his time a large number have been recovered (for in them the building of the pillars is credited to the sons of Lamech), we shall accept this assertion with many grains of allowance, and set it down to the general inaccuracy of Anderson when giving the authority of legend.

As the first mention of Enoch as a Freemason is made by Anderson, and as we not long afterward find him incorporated into the legendary history of the Order, we may in fairness credit to him the suggestion of the Legend, which was afterwards greatly developed.

This Legend was not, however, adopted into the English system, since neither Entick nor Northouck, who after Anderson edited the *Book of Constitutions*, say anything more of Enoch than had already been given by Anderson. They did, indeed, correct to some extent his statement, by ascribing the pillars either to Seth or to Enoch, leaning, therefore, to the authority of Josephus, but, equally with Anderson, abandoning the real tradition of the old Legend, which gave them to the children of Lamech.

We may consider it very evident that the *Legend of Enoch* was born on the continent of Europe. Brother Mackey was inclined,

¹"Constitutions," 1723, p. 3, notes.

at a guess, to assign its invention to the fertile genius of the Chevalier Ramsay. But if not to him, then to some one or other of our brotherhood having to do with the making of Masonic rites.

Ramsay was too scholarly a man to be ignorant of the many Oriental traditions, Arabic, Egyptian, and Rabbinical, concerning Enoch, that had been long in existence. Of this we have evidence in a very learned work on *The Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion*, published by him in 1749.

In this work¹ he refers to the tradition to be found in all nations, of a great man or legislator who was the first author of sacred symbols and hieroglyphics, and who taught the people their sacred mysteries and religious rites. This man, Ramsay says, was, among the Phoenicians, Thaut; the Greeks, Hermes; the Arabians, Edris. But he must have known that Thaut, Hermes, and Edris were all synonymous of Enoch, for he admits that "all these lived some time before the universal deluge, and they were all the same man, and consequently some antediluvian, or before the flood, patriarch."

Finally, he adds that "Some think that this antediluvian patriarch was Enoch himself." Then he presents, in the following language, those views which most probably supplied the suggestions that were afterward developed by himself, or some of his followers, in the full form of the Masonic Legend of Enoch:

"Whatever be in these conjectures," says Ramsay, "it is certain, from the principles laid down, that the antediluvian or Noevian patriarchs ought to have taken some surer measures for transmitting the knowledge of divine truths to their posterity, than by oral tradition, and, consequently, that they either invented or made use of hieroglyphics or symbols to preserve the memory of these sacred truths." These he calls the Enochian symbols.

He does not, indeed, make any allusion to a secret hiding place for these symbols of Enoch, and supposes that they must have been given to the sons of Noah and their families for generations, though in time they lost their true meaning. But the change made in the Masonic Legend was necessary to adapt it to a peculiar system of ritualism.

¹ Vol. ii, p. 12, etc.

We may wonder how Enoch ever became among the ancients a type of the mysteries of religion. The Book of Genesis devotes only three short verses to an account of him, and nothing is there said of him, his deeds, or his character, except an allusion to his piety.

The Oriental writers, however, abound in traditionary tales of the learning of the Patriarch. One tradition states that God bestowed upon him the gift of knowledge, and that he received thirty volumes from Heaven, filled with all the secrets of the most mysterious sciences. The Babylonians supposed him to have been intimately acquainted with the nature of the stars, and they credit to him the invention of astrology.

The Jewish Rabbins maintained that he was taught by Adam how to sacrifice and to worship the Deity aright. The Cabalistic book of Razel says that he received the divine mysteries through the direct line of the preceding Patriarchs.

Bar Hebræus, a Jewish writer, asserts that Enoch was the first who invented books and writing; that he taught men the art of building cities — thus evidently mixing him up with another Enoch, the son of Cain; that he discovered the knowledge of the Zodiac and the course of the stars; and that he taught the worship of God by religious rites.

There is a coincidence in the sacred character thus bestowed upon Enoch with his name and the age at which he died, and this may have had something to do with the mystical qualities bestowed upon him by the Orientalists.

The word *Enoch* signifies, in the Hebrew, *initiated* or *consecrated*, and would seem, as all Hebrew names are significant, to have authorized, or, perhaps, rather suggested the idea of his connection with a system of initiation into sacred rites.

He lived, the Scriptures say, three hundred and sixty-five years. This, too, would readily be received as having a mystical meaning, for 365 is the number of the days in a solar year and was, therefore, deemed a sacred number. Thus we have seen that the letters of the mystical word *Abrahas*, which was the Gnostic name of the Supreme Deity, amounted, according to their numerical value in the Greek alphabet, to 365, which was also the case with *Mithras*, the god to whom the Mithraic Mysteries were dedicated. This may account for the statement of

Bar Hebræus that Enoch appointed festivals and sacrifices to the sun at the periods when that body of light entered each of the zodiacal signs.

Goldziher, a German ethnologist, a student of race and family growth, has advanced a similar idea in his work on *Mythology among the Hebrews*. He says:

"The solar character of Enoch admits of no doubt. He is brought into connection with the building of towns — a solar feature. He lives exactly three hundred and sixty-five years, the number of days of the solar year; which can not be accidental. And even then he did not die, but 'Enoch walked with Elohim, and was no more (to be seen), for Elohim took him away.' In the old times when the figure of Enoch was imagined, this was doubtless called Enoch's Ascension to heaven, as in the late traditional legends Ascensions to heaven are generally acknowledged to be solar features."¹

J. Skinner² calls attention to the remarkable development of the Enoch Legend in the Apocalyptic literature, Books of Revelation, where Enoch appears as a preacher of repentance, a prophet of future events, and the receiver of a more than natural knowledge of the secrets of heaven and earth. "The origin of this tradition has probably been discovered in a striking Babylonian parallel. The seventh name in the list of antediluvian, before the Flood, kings given by Berosus is Evedoranchus, which (it seems certain) is a corruption of Enmeduranki, a king of Sippar who was received into the fellowship of Shamash (the sun-god) and Ramman, was initiated into the mysteries of heaven and earth, and became the founder of a gild of priestly diviners. When or how this myth became known to the Jews we can not tell. A trace of an original connection with the sun-god has been suspected in the 365 years of Enoch's life (the number of days in the solar year). At all events it is highly probable that the Babylonian legend contains the germ of the later conception of Enoch as embodied in the Apocalyptic Book of Enoch (about 105 to 64 years before Christ), and the later Book of the Secrets of Enoch."

These statements and speculations have been objected to, because they would tend to make Enoch an idolater and a sun-

¹ Chap. v, sect. viii, p. 127, Martineau's Translation.

² See James Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible" (Scribners, 1914), p. 230.

worshipper. This is a consequence by no means absolutely necessary, but, as the whole is merely traditionary, we need waste no time in defending the orthodox character of the Patriarch's religious views.

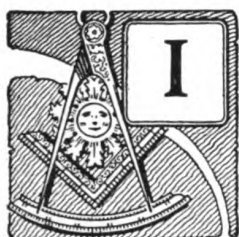
After all, it would appear that the *Legend of Enoch*, being wholly unknown to the Fraternity in the Middle Ages, unrecognized in the *Legend of the Craft*, and the name even, not mentioned in any of the old records, was first introduced into the rituals of some of the higher degrees which began to be known toward the middle of the 18th century; that it was invented by some of those ritual makers who immediately succeeded the Chevalier Ramsay, and that in its arrangement suggestions were freely borrowed from the Rabbinical and Oriental traditions on the same subject. It is impossible then to assign to this legend the slightest historical character. It is made up altogether out of traditions which were the inventions of Eastern imagination.

We must view it, therefore, as an allegory; but as one which has a most serious symbolic character. It was intended to teach the doctrine of Divine Truth by the symbol of the Holy Name — the Tetragrammaton — the Name most reverently consecrated in the Jewish system as well as in others, and which has always been one of the most important and prominent symbols of Speculative Freemasonry.

In the Continental system of the High Degrees, this symbol is presented in the form of the *Legend of Enoch*. From the English system of Ancient Craft Freemasonry, that legend is rejected, or rather it never has been admitted into it. In its place, there is another esoteric legend, which, differing altogether in details, is identical in result and effects the same symbolism. But this will be more appropriately discussed when we come to treat in detail the symbolism of Freemasonry.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

NOAH AND THE NOACHITES



IN reality, there is no legend of Noah to be found in any of the orthodox Masonic rituals. There is no myth, like that of Enoch or Euclid, which intimately connects him with the legendary history of the institution. Yet the story of his life has exercised a very important influence in the origin and the development of the principles of Speculative Freemasonry.

Dr. Oliver has related a few traditions of Noah which, he says, are Masonic. But they never had any general favor among the Craft, as they are referred to by no other writer, and, if they ever existed, are now happily discarded.

The influence of Noah upon Masonic doctrine is to be traced to the almost universal belief of men in the events of the Flood, and the following up of this deluge by the founding in many nations of a system of religion known to ethnologists, students of race and family history, as the "Arkite worship." Of this a brief notice must be taken before we can proceed to investigate the connection of the name of Noah with Speculative Freemasonry.

The character and the actions of Noah are to be looked upon from a twofold standpoint, the historic and the legendary.

The historic account of Noah is in the sixth and seventh chapters of the Book of Genesis, and are within the reach of every reader, with which, however, they must already be very familiar.

The legendary account is to be found in the almost endless store of traditions scattered among nearly all the nations of the world where some more or less dim memory of a cataclysm has been preserved.

If we examine the ancient writers, we shall find ample evidence that among all the pagan peoples there was a tradition of a Flood that at some far distant time had swept over the earth.

This tradition was greatly distorted from the biblical source, and the very name of the protected Patriarch was forgotten and replaced by some other, which varied in different countries. Thus, in different places, he had received the names of Xisuthrus, Prometheus, Deucalion, Ogyges, and many others, where the name has been rendered very unlike itself by various changes. But everywhere the name was accompanied by a tradition, which also varied in its details, of a deluge by which mankind in general had been destroyed, and the race had, through the means of a certain person, been renewed.

We can suppose that so important an event as the deluge would have been told by the Patriarch to his posterity, and that in after-times, when, by reason of the mouth-to-ear repetition of the history, the particular details of the event would be greatly distorted from the truth, a reverence for this new founder of the race of men would be retained. At length, when various systems of idolatry began to be established, Noah, under whatever name he may have been known, would have been among the first to whom divine honors would be paid. Hence arose that system known to modern students as the "Arkite worship," in whose rites and mysteries, which were in due course taken up by the other ancient religions, there were always some allusions to the events of the Noachic flood — to the ark, as the womb of Nature, to the eight persons saved in it, as the ogdoad or sacred number — and to the revival of the world, as symbolizing the passage from death to immortal life.

It is not, therefore, surprising that Noah should have become a mystical personage, and that the modern Speculative Freemasons should have sought to use some reference to him in their symbolic system, though no such idea appears to have been held by the Operative Freemasons who preceded them.

On examining the old records of the Operative Freemasons it will be found that no place is assigned to Noah, either as a Freemason or as one of the founders of the "science." He receives only the briefest mention.

The Halliwell Poem has his name and the Flood as merely referred to or denoting an era of time in the world's history. It is only a statement that the tower of Babel was begun many years after "Noe's flood."

The Cooke MS. has the record a little longer, but still is but an historical story of the Flood, in accordance with the biblical details.

The Dowland MS. and all the other manuscripts of the *Legend of the Craft* that succeeded it, has the reference to Noah very limited, his name only being mentioned, and that of his sons, from whom descended Hermes, who found one of the pillars and taught to other men the science thereon described. So far, Noah has had no part in Freemasonry.

Anderson, in the *Book of Constitutions* altered and enlarged the old Craft Legends at his pleasure. He calls Noah and his three sons "all Masons true," and says that they brought over from the Flood the traditions and arts of the antediluvians and taught them to their growing offspring. This was perhaps the first time that the Patriarch was presented to the attention of the Fraternity in a Masonic character.

Anderson seems to have cherished this idea, for in the second edition of the *Constitutions* he still further develops it by saying that the offspring of Noah, "as they journeyed from the East (the plains of Mount Ararat, where the ark rested) toward the West, they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and dwelt there together as NOACHIDÆ, or sons of Noah. He adds, without the slightest historical authority, that this word "Noachidæ" was "the first name of Masons, according to some old traditions." It would have puzzled him to specify any such tradition.

Having thus invented and adopted the name as the distinctive designation of a Freemason, he repeats it in his second edition or revision of the "Old Charges" appended to the *Book of Constitutions*. The first of these charges, in the *Constitutions* of 1723, contained this passage: "A Mason is obliged by his tenure to obey the moral law." In the edition of 1738, Dr. Anderson has, without authority, completed the sentence by adding the words "as a true Noachida." This addition was rejected by Entick, who edited the third edition in 1756, the Committee who prepared the fourth edition of 1767, and by Northouck, who edited the fifth in 1784, each of whom restored the old reading, which has ever since been preserved in all the *Constitutions* of the Grand Lodge of England.

Lawrence Dermott,¹ however, who closely followed the second edition of Anderson, in the composition of his *Ahiman Rezon* of course adopted the new term.

About that time, or a little later, a degree was prepared on the continent of Europe, bearing the name of "Patriarch Noachite," one peculiar feature of which was that it represented the existence of two classes or lines of Freemasons, the one descending from the Temple of Solomon, and who were called Hiramites, and the other tracing their origin to Noah, who were styled Noachites.

Neither Preston nor Hutchinson, nor any other writer of the 18th century, appears to have accepted the word for a similar or like use. But it was a favorite with Dr. Oliver, and under his example it has become of so common use that *Noachida* and *Freemason* have come to be considered as meaning the same thing.

What does this word really signify, and how came Anderson to adopt it as a Masonic term? The answers to these questions are by no means difficult.

Noachida, or Noachides, from which we get the English Noachite, is a name meaning the member of a family or race, and is lawfully formed according to Greek usage, where Atrides means a descendant of Atreus, or Heraclides a descendant of Heracles. Noachides, or to use its other names Noachida or Noachites, means, therefore, a descendant of Noah.

But why, it may be asked, are the Freemasons called the descendants of Noah? Why has this Patriarch been selected alone to represent the headship of the Fraternity? There is no doubt that Dr. Anderson was led to the adoption of the word by the following reason:

After Noah came out of the ark, he is said to have taught seven precepts or laws for the government of the new race of men of whom he was to be the father.

These seven precepts are: (1) Do justice; (2) Worship God; (3) Abstain from idolatry; (4) Preserve chastity; (5) Commit no murder; (6) Do not steal; (7) Eat no blood.

¹ Born in Ireland 1720, initiated 1740, Master of No. 26, Dublin, 1746, elected Grand Secretary of the "Ancients," 1752. Wrote a Book of Constitutions bearing the title of "Ahiman Rezon," which the Book of Masonic Law of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, page 210, revision of 1915, traces to a Spanish origin and explains it to mean "There is the full account of the law."

These seven obligations, says the Rev. Dr. Raphall,¹ are held binding on all men, inasmuch as all are descendants of Noah, and the Rabbins maintain that he who observes them, though he be not an Israelite, has a share in the future life, and it is the duty of every Jew to enforce their due observance whenever he has the power to do so.

In consequence of this, the Jewish religion was not confined during its existence in Palestine to the Jewish nation only, but proselytes or converts of three kinds were freely admitted. One of these classes was the "Proselytes of the Gate." These were persons who, without undergoing the rite of circumcision or observing the ritual laid down by the law of Moses, engaged to worship the true God and to observe the seven precepts of Noah, and these things they were to do whether they resided in Judea or in foreign lands. They were not, however, admitted to all the privileges of the Jewish religion; marriage with Israelites was forbidden, and they were not permitted to enter within the holy bounds of the temple. So that, although they were Noachidæ, they were not considered equal to the true children of Abraham.

Anderson, who was as a clergyman familiar with the Bible, was, of course, acquainted with these facts. But, with a more tolerant spirit than the Jewish law, which gave the converted Gentiles only a qualified reception, he was disposed to admit into the full fellowship of Freemasonry all the descendants of Noah who would observe the precepts of the Patriarch, these being the only moral laws required by Freemasonry.

In giving the history of the introduction of the word into Freemasonry, we have not cited among the authorities the document known as the Stonehouse MS., because it was verified by a person of that name, but more usually called the Krause MS., because it was first published in a German translation by Dr. Krause in his *Three Oldest Documents*. It has been alleged to be a copy of the *York Constitutions*, enacted in 926, but that is generally admitted nowadays to be doubtful. Yet, as it is not unlikely that it was originally written by someone living about the same time as Anderson, and about the date of the publishing of the *Constitutions* of 1738, it may be accepted, so far as it sup-

¹ "Genesis, with Translation and Notes," by Rev. Morris J. Raphall, p. 52.

plies us with a suggestion of the motive that induced Anderson to put the word "Noachida" into the "Old Charges."

In the Krause MS., under the head of "The Laws or Obligations laid before his Brother Masons by Prince Edwin," we find the following article which was translated by Brother Mackey from the German of Krause, because the original English document is nowhere to be found:

"The first obligation is that you shall sincerely honor God and obey the laws of the Noachites, because they are divine laws, which should be obeyed by all the world. Therefore, you must avoid all heresies and not thereby sin against God."

The language of this document is more precise than that of Anderson, though both have the same purpose. The meaning is that the only religious laws which a Freemason is required to obey are those contained in the code credited to Noah. This sentiment is still further developed toward the close of the "Old Charges," where it is said that the Freemason is obliged only "to that religion in which all men agree," excluding, therefore, atheism, and requiring the observance of such simple laws of morality as are set forth in the precepts of Noah.

Anderson had, however, a particular object in the use of the word "Noachida." The Krause MS. says that the Freemason "must obey the laws of the Noachites"; he is to observe the seven precepts of Noah, without being required to observe any other religious dogmas outside of these — these being left to himself.

But Anderson says he "must obey the moral law as a true Noachida," by which he intimates that that title is proper for a Freemason. He has shown that this was his meaning by telling us, earlier in his book, that "Noachidæ was the first name of Masons, according to some old traditions."

The object of Anderson in using this word in the second edition of the *Constitutions* was to sustain his theory that Noah was the founder of the science of Freemasonry after the Flood. This was the theory taught by Dr. Oliver a century afterwards, who followed Anderson in the use of the word, with the same meaning and the same object, and his example has been imitated by many writers. When Anderson speaks of a Noachida or a Noachite as a word meaning Freemason, he is in error. Although

all Freemasons are necessarily the descendants of Noah, all the descendants of Noah are not Freemasons.

If by use of the word Anderson indicates that Noah was the founder of Freemasonry, he is equally in error; for that theory can not be sustained. His statement that Noah and his three sons were "all Masons true" has no historical support, and lacks probability. Therefore, when we speak or write historically of Freemasonry, this word Noachida, or Noachite, should be avoided, since it leads to confused ideas, and to error.

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

THE LEGEND OF HIRAM ABIF



THIS is the most important of all the legends of Freemasonry. This tradition will therefore be considered critically in respect to its origin, its history, and its meaning.

Before, however, proceeding to the discussion of these important subjects, and the investigation of the truly mythical character of Hiram Abif, it will be proper to inquire into the meaning of his name, or rather the meaning of the title that goes with it.

In the places in Scripture where Hiram Abif is mentioned he is called at one time (in *2 Chronicles*, ii, 13), by the King of Tyre, in the letter written by him to King Solomon, CHURAM ABI; in another place (in *2 Chronicles*, iv, 16), where the writer of the narrative is recording the work done by him for Solomon, CHURAM ABIV, or, as it might be pronounced according to the sound of the Hebrew letters, ABIU. But Luther, in his German translation of the Bible, adopted the pronunciation ABIF, exchanging the flat *v* for the sharp *f*. In this he was followed by Anderson, who was the first to present the full name of *Hiram Abif* to the Craft. This he did in the first edition of the English book of *Constitutions*.

Since Anderson's time at least the name of Hiram Abif has been adopted by and has become familiar to the Craft as the term applied to the cunning or skillful artist who was sent by Hiram, King of Tyre, to assist King Solomon in the building of the Temple. In *Chronicles* and *Kings* we find Churam or Hiram, as we may use the initial letter as a guttural or an aspirate, and Chiram or Hiram, the vowel *u* or *i* being indifferently used. Hirom is also found as a marginal reference in *1 Kings*, vii, 40. But Masonic usage has universally adopted the word *Hiram*.

Now, the *Abi* and *Abiv*, used by the King of Tyre, in the Book of *Chronicles* form no part of the name, but are simply inflections of the possessive pronouns *my* and *his* added to the word *Ab*.

Ab in Hebrew means *father*, *i* is *my*, and *in*, *iv*, or *if* is *his*. *Abi* is therefore *my father*. So he is called by the King of Tyre when he is describing him to Solomon, "Hiram my father." *Abif* is *his father*. He is so spoken of by the historian when he recounts the various kinds of work which were done for King Solomon by "Hiram his father."

But the word *Ab* in Hebrew, though it does in the first place mean a male parent, has other explanations springing from this root source. It is evident that in none of the passages where he is mentioned is it intended to intimate that he held such relationship to either the King of Tyre or the King of Israel.

The word "father" was applied by the Hebrews as a term of honor, or to signify a station of pre-eminence. Buxtorf¹ says it sometimes signified *Master*, and he cites the fourth chapter of *Genesis*, where Jabal is called the father of cattle and Jubal the father of musicians.

Hiram Abif was most probably selected by the King of Tyre to be sent to Solomon as an efficient artificer of pre-eminent skill that he might execute the principal works in the interior of the Temple and make the various utensils intended for the sacred services. He was a master in his art or calling, and properly dignified with a title which announced his distinguished character. The title of Father, which was given to him, denotes, says Smith,² the respect and esteem in which he was held, according to the similar custom of the people of the East at the present day.

We can also favorably consider the suggestion of Dr. McClintock that "*Hiram my father* seems to mean *Hiram my counsellor*; that is to say, *foreman* or *master-workman*."³

Applying this meaning to the passages in *Chronicles* which refer to this artist, we shall see how easily every difficulty is removed and the Craftsman Hiram placed in his true light.

¹ "Lexicon Talmudicum."

² "Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature."

³ "Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Classical Literature."

When King Hiram, wishing to aid the King of Israel in the building he has planned to erect, writes him a letter in which he promises to comply with the request of Solomon to send him timber from Lebanon and wood-cutters to hew it, as an additional mark of his friendship and his desire to give his help in building "a house for Jehovah," he gives him the services of one of his most skillful artisans and announces the gift in these words: "And now I have sent a skillful man, endued with understanding, my master-workman Hiram."

And when the historian who wrote the *Chronicles* of the kingdom had told about all the work that Hiram had accomplished, such as the pillars of the porch, the lavers and the candlesticks, and the sacred vessels, he concludes by saying that all these things were made for King Solomon by *his master-workman Hiram*, in the Hebrew *gnasah Hiram Abif Lamelech Shelomoh*.

Hiram or Hiram was his proper name. *Ab*, father of his trade or master-workman, his title, and *i* or *if*, meaning *my* or *his*, the possessive pronominal suffix, used according to circumstances. The King of Tyre calls him *Hiram Abi*, "*my* master-workman." When the chronicler speaks of him in his relation to King Solomon, he calls him *Hiram Abif* "*his* master-workman." As all his Masonic relations are with Solomon, this latter title has been adopted, from the time of Anderson, by the Craft.

Having thus disposed of the name and title of the person who constitutes the main point in this Masonic Legend, we may go on to an examination of the origin and gradual growth of the myth.

"The Legend of the Temple-Builder," as he is commonly but improperly called, is so intimately connected in the ritual with the symbolic history of the Temple, that we would very naturally be led to suppose that the one has always been of the same period and co-existent with the other. The evidence on this point is, however, by no means final or satisfactory, though a critical examination of the old manuscripts would seem to show that the writers of those documents, while compiling from traditional sources the *Legend of the Craft*, were not altogether ignorant of the rank and services that have been credited later by the Speculative Freemasons of the present day to Hiram Abif. They certainly had some notion that in the building of the Temple at

Jerusalem King Solomon had the assistance of a skillful artist who had been supplied to him by the King of Tyre.

The origin of the Legend must be looked for in the Scriptural account of the building of the Temple of Jerusalem. The story, as told in the Books of *Kings* and *Chronicles*, is to this effect.

On the death of King David, his son and successor, Solomon, resolved to carry into execution his father's long thought-out design of erecting a Temple on Mount Moriah for the worship of Jehovah. But the Jews were not a nation of artisans, but rather of farmers, and had even in the time of David depended on the aid of the Phoenicians in the construction of the house built for that monarch at the beginning of his reign. Solomon, therefore, applied to his ally, Hiram, King of Tyre, to furnish him trees from Lebanon and with hewers to prepare them, for, as he said in his letter to the Tyrian King, "Thou knowest that there is not any among us that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians."

Hiram complied with his request, and exchanged the skilled workmen of sterile Phœnicia for the oil and corn and wine of more fertile Judea.

Among the artists sent by the King of Tyre to the King of Israel, was one whose appearance at Jerusalem seems to have been in response to the following application of Solomon, recorded in the second Book of *Chronicles*, the second chapter, seventh verse:

"Send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple and in crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that are with me in Judah, and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide."

In the epistle of King Hiram, answering this request, contained in the same book and chapter, in the thirteenth and fourteenth verses, are the following words:

"And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, of Hiram my father's. The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skillful to work in gold and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall

be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David, thy father."

A further description is given in the seventh chapter of the first Book of *Kings*, in the thirteenth and fourteenth verses, and in these words:

"And King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali — and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass; and he was filled with wisdom and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass, and he came to King Solomon and wrought all his work."

Very evidently the circumstances reported in these verses from the Bible furnish the origin of the Legend which was put into the Masonic system, and which, on the institution of Speculative Freemasonry, was adopted as the most prominent portion of the Third Degree.

Before we go further we must not leave one peculiarity of these verses unmentioned. Both tell us that the father of Hiram Abif was a man of Tyre, but as to his mother she is said to have been in the one case "of the tribe Naphtali," and in the other "a woman of the daughters of Dan." Brothers Hughan and Hawkins submit an opinion credited to Bishop Patrick who supposes that she was herself of the tribe of Dan but that her first husband was of the tribe of Naphtali by whom she had this son; and that when she became a widow she married a man of Tyre who is called Hiram's father because he brought him up and was the husband of his mother.

Among various other explanations is one¹ by Edward Young that the Dan in question was a city in the land of Naphtali and therefore Hiram's mother could properly be said to be of both places. It was the same as saying a person is a New Yorker and also a resident of the United States. The two assertions would not contradict one another in that case.

Another explanation is that the shifting of boundaries accounts for the difference.²

Brother Morris Rosenbaum has published a pamphlet, *The Two Hiram's*, discussing the probability that the designer of the

¹ See "Labor among the Jews," in his Special Report on Labor, 1875, page 19, by Edward Young, then Chief of the United States Bureau of Statistics at Washington, D. C.

² See article, "Naphtali," by James A. Craig, in Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible."

building was the father of the artificer who cast the brazen pillars and holy vessels. This theory has been independently examined by several students including the present writer. Let the reader carefully note in the two verses from the Bible, that in the one case Hiram is "sent," in the other instance he is "fetched." In one verse he is "sent" by Hiram, King of Tyre. In the other, "Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre." The latter might be understood to mean that an escort was sent to bring Hiram from Tyre to Jerusalem. Assuming that disaster had come upon the first Hiram then there would be all the more reason for added protection being given the second Hiram.

Brother Charles James Ball considers in volume v, 1892, Proceedings, Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2076, London, *The Proper Names of Masonic Tradition*, and Brother R. H. Baxter has a paper, *The Third Degree: An Attempt to Establish its Antiquity and to Find Evidence of its Legend in Holy Writ* in the Transactions, Installed Masters' Association, Leeds, England, page 77, volume x, 1913-1914. In brief, it is pointed out the various names Hiram, Huram, Adoniram, Hadoram and their variants have, as Brother Baxter says, "a very nearly common signification." Adoniram was in charge of the workmen, see 1 *Kings*, v, 14; and Hadoram lost his life by being stoned to death, 2 *Chronicles*, x, 18. Of course, the fact that in the Legend Solomon survives Hiram and in the Scriptures Hadoram lives after Solomon's death must not be overlooked, but in the lapse of centuries and growth of tradition these are perhaps unimportant.

The mediæval Freemasons were acquainted with the fact that King Solomon had an assistant in the works of the Temple, and that that assistant had been sent to him by King Hiram. But there was considerable confusion in their minds upon the subject, and an ignorance of the scriptural name and qualities of the person.

In the Halliwell or Regius MS., the earliest known to us, the Legend is not given. Either the writers of the two poems of which that manuscript is composed were ignorant of it, or in the combination of the two poems there has been a mutilation and the Hiramic Legend has been omitted. The Cooke MS. refers to it and this is repeated in various forms in later constitutions as follows:

"And at the makynge of the temple in Salamonis tyme as hit is seyde in the bibull in the iii booke of Regum in tertio Regum capitulo quinto, that Salomon had iiii score thousand masons at his werke. And the kyngis sone of Tyre was his master mason."

The reference here made to the third Book of *Kings* is according to the old distribution of the Hebrew canon, where the two Books of *Samuel* are called the first and second Books of *Kings*. According to our present canon, the reference would be to the fifth chapter of the first Book of *Kings*. In that chapter nothing is said of Hiram Abif, but it is recorded there that "Adoniram was over the levy." Now the literal meaning of Adoniram is *the lord Hiram*. As the King of Tyre had promised to send his workmen to Lebanon, and as it is stated that Adoniram superintended the men who were there hewing the trees, the old legendist, not taking into account that the levy of thirty thousand, over whom Adoniram presided, were Israelites and not Phoenicians, but supposing that they had been sent to Lebanon by Hiram, King of Tyre, and that he had sent Adoniram with them, and viewing the word as meaning *the lord Hiram*, hastily came to the conclusion that this Lord or Prince Hiram was the son of the King, the person sent to Solomon to be his master-mason or master-builder.

This error was repeated in succeeding manuscripts, and the word *Adon*, as meaning *lord* or prince, seems to have been always assumed in some one or other corrupted form as the name of the workman sent by King Hiram to King Solomon, and whom the Freemasons of the present day know as Hiram Abif.

Thus in the Dowland MS., A.D. 1550, we find:

"And furthermore there was a Kinge of another region that men called IRAM, and he loved well Kinge Solomon and he gave him tymber to his worke. And he had a sonn that height (was called) AYNON, and he was a Master of Geometrie and was chief Master of all his Masons, and was Master of all his gravings and carvinge and of all manner of Masonrye that longed to the Temple." *Aynon* is here a corruption of *Adon*. The Lansdowne MS., A.D. 1600, says nearly the same thing, King Iram "had a sonne that was called a man."

The initial letter *a* in this name has been, by careless writing, separated from the remaining letters, *man*; the true reading is

Aman, itself an error, instead of *Amon*, and this is a corruption of *Adon*. This is shown by the York MS., Number 1 (A.D. 1600), where the name is spelled *Amon*. This is also the name in the Lodge of Hope MS., dated A.D. 1675-1700.

The Grand Lodge MS., A.D. 1650, calls him the son of the King of Tyre, but his name is given as *Aynone*, another form of *Adon*. The Sloane MS., A.D. 1646, has *Aynon*, the final *e* being omitted. In the Harleian MS., A.D. 1650, both the final *e* and the medial *y* are omitted, the name becoming *Anon*, still nearer to *Adon*.

The Alnwick MS., A.D. 1701, has the name twisted into *Ajuon*. In these manuscripts the Legend continues to call this artist the son of the King of Tyre, whose name is said to be *Hiram*, or more usually *Iram*; and hence the various spellings of *Amon*, *Aynon*, or *Anon*, being restored to the true form of *Adon*, with which word the old Freemasons were acquainted, as signifying *Lord* or *Prince*, we get, by adding it to his father's name, *Adon-Iram* or *Adoniram*, the Lord or Prince Hiram.

The Papworth MS., A.D. 1720, is too near the time of the Revival and the real establishment of Speculative Freemasonry to be of much value in this inquiry. It does say that the artist was the son of King Hiram. But it changes his name to *Benaim*. This is probably an incorrect inflection of the Hebrew word *Boneh*, a builder, and shows that the writer, attempting to correct the error of those who had spelled *Adon* as *Anon* or *Amon*, or *Ajuon*, had in his smattering of Hebrew made a greater one.

The Krause MS. is worthless as authority. Probably that was written after the publication of the first edition of Anderson's *Constitutions*, and, of course, takes the name from that work.

The name of Hiram Abif is first introduced to public notice by Anderson in 1723, in the book of *Constitutions* printed that year. In this work he changes the *Legend of the Craft* to say that the King of Tyre sent to King Solomon "his namesake Hiram Abif, the prince of architects."

Then quoting in the original Hebrew a passage from the second Book of *Chronicles*, where the name of Hiram Abif is to be found, he explains it "by allowing the word *Abif* to be the surname of Hiram the Mason"; furthermore he adds that in the passage where the King of Tyre calls him "Hiram of my father's,"

the meaning is that Hiram was "the chief Master Mason of my father, King Abibalus," a most uncritical attempt, because he mixes, as its foundation, the Hebrew original and the English version. He had not discovered the true explanation, namely, that *Hiram* is the name, and *Ab* the title, denoting, as we have before said, *Master-Workman*, and that *in*, or *iv*, or *if*, is a pronominal suffix, meaning *his*, so that when speaking of him in his relation to King Solomon, he is called *Hiram Abif*, that is *Hiram*, *his* or *Solomon's Master-Workman*.

Anderson put an entirely new element in the Legend when he said, in the same book, that "The wise King Solomon was Grand Master of the Lodge at Jerusalem, King Hiram was Grand Master of the Lodge at Tyre, and the inspired Hiram Abif was Master of Work."

In the second or 1738 edition of the *Constitutions*, Anderson considerably enlarged the Legend, for reasons that will be considered when we come, later in this work, to treat of the origin of the Third Degree, but on which it is here unnecessary to dwell.

In that second edition, Anderson asserts that the tradition is that King Hiram had been Grand Master of all Freemasons, but that when the Temple was finished he gave up that leading position to King Solomon. No such tradition, nor any reference to it, is to be found in any of the Old Records that are now in existence, and it is, moreover, entirely opposed by the current of opinion of all later Masonic writers.

From these suggestions of Anderson, and from some others of a more esoteric character, made, it is supposed, by him and by Dr. Desaguliers about the time of the Revival, we derive that form of the *Legend of Hiram Abif* which has been preserved to the present day with singular uniformity by the Freemasons of all countries.

The substance of this Legend, so far as it is concerned in the present investigation, is that at the building of the Temple there were three Grand Masters — Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre, and Hiram Abif, and that the last was the architect or chief builder of the edifice.

As that which relates to the fate of Hiram Abif is to be explained in an altogether allegorical or symbolical sense, it will

more appropriately come under consideration when we are treating in another part of this work, of the Symbolism of Freemasonry.

Our present study will be the legendary character of Hiram Abif as the chief Master Mason of the Temple. Our investigations will be directed to the origin and meaning of the myth which has now, by universal consent of the Craft, been adopted, whether correctly or not we shall see hereafter.

The question before us, let it be understood, is not as to the historic truth of the Hiram Legend, as set forth in the Third Degree of the Masonic ritual — not as to whether this be the account of an actual occurrence or merely an allegory accompanied by a moral signification — not as to the truth or error of the theory which finds the origin of Freemasonry in the Temple of Jerusalem — but how it has been that the Freemasons of the Middle Ages should have put into their *Legend of the Craft* the idea that a worker in metal — in plain words, a smith — was the chief builder at the Temple. This thought, and this thought alone, must govern us in the whole course of our inquiry.

Of all the myths that have prevailed among the people of the earth, hardly any has had a greater antiquity or a more extensive existence than that of the *Smith* who worked in metals, and made shields and swords for warriors, or jewelry for queens and noble ladies. Such a myth is to be found among the traditions of the earliest religions,¹ and being handed down through ages of popular service, it is preserved, with various natural changes, in the legends of the Middle Ages, from Scandinavia to the most southern limit of the Latin race. Long before this period it was to be found in the mythology and the folk-lore of Assyria, of India, of Greece, and of Rome.

Freemasonry, in its most recent form as well as in its older Legend, while adopting the story of Hiram Abif, once called Adon Hiram, has strangely distorted its true features, as shown in the Books of *Kings* and *Chronicles*; and it has, without any historical authority, transformed the Scriptural idea of a skillful smith into that of an architect and builder. Hence, in the Old Legend he is styled a "Master of Geometry and of all Masonry," and in

¹ "Vala, one of the names of Indra, in the Aryan mythology, is traced," says Sir George William Cox, "through the Teutonic lands until we reach the cave of Wayland Smith, in Warwickshire."—"Mythology of the Aryan Nations," 1870, vol. ii, p. 326.

the modern ritual of Speculative Freemasonry he is called "the Builder," and to him, in both, is supposed to have been intrusted the superintendence of the Temple of Solomon, during its construction, and the control of those workmen — the stone squarers and masons — who were engaged in the labor of its erection.

To strip this Legend of its corrupt form, and to give to Hiram Abif, who was actually an historic personage, his true position among the workmen at the Temple, can not affect, in the slightest degree, the symbolism of which he forms so much a part, while it will rationally account for the importance that has been given to him in the old as well as in the new Masonic system.

Whether we make Hiram Abif the chief Builder and the Operative Grand Master of Solomon's Temple, or whether we give that position to *Anon*, *Amon*, or *Ajuon*, as it is in the Old Legend, or to *Adoniram*, as it is done in some Masonic rites, the symbolism will remain unaffected. The symbolic idea rests on the fact of a chief Builder having existed, and it is immaterial to the development of the symbolism what was his true name. The instruction intended to be conveyed in the Legend of the Third Degree must remain unchanged, no matter whom we may identify as its hero; for he truly represents neither *Hiram* nor *Anon* nor *Adoniram* nor any other individual person, but rather the idea of man in an abstract sense.

It is, however, important to the truth of history that the real facts should be taken out of the mythical statements which envelop them. We must throw off the husk, that we may get at the germ. Besides, it will add a new attraction to the system of Masonic ritualism if we shall be able to trace in it any remnant of that oldest and most interesting of the myths, the *Legend of the Smith*, which, as we have said, has universally prevailed in the most ancient forms of religious faith.

Before investigating this *Legend of the Smith* in its reference to Freemasonry and to this particular *Legend of Hiram Abif* which we are now considering, it will be proper to inquire into the character of the Legend as it existed in the old religions and in the myths of the Middle Ages. We may then inquire how this Legend, adopted by Freemasonry in its stricter ancient form of the Legend of Tubal Cain, became afterward mixed up with another legend of a Temple-Builder.

If we go back to the oldest of all mythologies, that which is taught in the Vedic hymns, we shall find the fire-god *Agni*, whose flames are described as being "luminous, powerful, fearful, and not to be trusted."

The element of fire thus worshipped by the primeval Aryans, as an instrument of good or of evil, was later spoken of in a personal sense by the Greeks; the Vedic hymns, referring to the continual revival of the flame, as it was fed by fuel, called it the fire god *Agni*; also *Gavishtha*, that is, the ever young. From this, the Greeks got their *Hephæstus*, the mighty workman, the immortal smith who forged the weapons of the gods, and, at the prayer of Thetis, made the perfect armor of Achilles. The Romans were indebted to their Aryan forefathers for the same idea of the power of fire, and personified it in their *Vulcan*, a name which is evidently derived from the Sanscrit *Ulka*, a firebrand, although a similarity of sound has led many etymologists to deduce the Roman *Vulcan* from the Semitic *Tubal Cain*. Indeed, until the modern discoveries in comparative philology, this was the universal opinion of the learned.

Among the Babylonians an important god was *Bil-can*. He was the fire-god, and the name seems to be derived from *Baal*, or *Bel*, and *Cain*, the god of smiths, or the master smith. George Smith, in his *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, thinks that there is possibly some connection here with the biblical *Tubal Cain* and the classical *Vulcan*.

From the fragments of Sanchoniathon we learn that the Phœnicians had a hero whom he calls *Chrysor*. He was worshipped after his death, in consequence of the many inventions that he bestowed on man, under the name of *Diamichius*; that is, the great inventor. To him was ascribed the invention of all those arts which the Greeks credited to *Hephæstus*, and the Romans to *Vulcan*. Bishop Cumberland derives the name of *Chrysor* from the Hebrew *Charatz*, or the *Sharpener*, a very apt name of one who taught the use of iron tools. The authorized version of *Genesis*, which calls *Tubal Cain* "an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron," is better rendered in the Septuagint and the Vulgate as "a sharpener of every instrument in brass and iron."

Tubal Cain has been derived, in the English lectures of Dr. Hemming, and, of course, by Dr. Oliver, from a generally received

explanation that *Cain* meant *worldly possessions*, and the true symbolism of the name has been thus mistaken. The true derivation is from *kin*, which, says Gesenius, has the especial meaning to *forge iron*, whence comes *Kain*, a spear or lance, an instrument of iron that has been forged. In the Arabic it is *Kayin*. "This word," says Dr. Goldziher in his work on *Mythology Among the Hebrews*, "which with other synonymous names of trades occurs several times on the so-called Nabatean Sinaitic inscriptions, signifies *Smith*, maker of agricultural implements,¹ and has preserved this meaning in the Arabic *kayin* and the Aramaic *kinaya*, whilst in the later Hebrew it was lost altogether, being probably suppressed through the biblical attempt to derive the proper name *Cain* etymologically from *kana*, "to gain." Here it is that Hemming and Oliver got their false symbolism of "worldly possessions."

Goldziher attempts to identify mythologically *Cain*, the murderer of his brother, with the son of Lamech. Whether he be correct or not in his theory, it is at least a curious thing that *Cain*, which we have shown to mean a *smith*, should have been the first builder of a city, and that the same name should have been assigned to the first forger of metals, while the old Masonic Legend makes the master smith, Hiram of Tyre, also the chief builder for Solomon.

It will be interesting to trace the progress of the myth which has given in every age and every country this prominent position among artisans to the smith.

Hephæstus, or *Vulcan*, kindling his forges in the isle of Lemnos, and with his Cyclopean or giant journeymen beating out and shaping and welding the red-hot iron into the forms of spears and javelins and helmets and coats of mail, was the southern development of the Aryan fire-god *Agni*. "*Hephæstus*, or *Vulcan*," says Diodorus Siculus, "was the first founder in iron, brass, gold, silver, and all fusible metals, and he taught the uses to which fire might be applied by artificers." Thus he was called by the ancients the god of blacksmiths.

The Scandinavians, or northern descendants of the Aryan race, brought with them, in their emigration from Caucasus, the

¹ He confines the expression to "agricultural" to enforce a particular theory then under consideration. He might correctly have been more general and included all other kinds of tools and weapons, warlike and mechanical as well as agricultural.

same reverence for fire and for the working of metals by its potent use. They did not, however, bring with them such recollections of *Agni* as would invent a god of fire like the *Hephæstus* and *Vulcan* of the Greeks and Romans. They had, indeed, *Loki*, who took his name, it is said by some, from the Icelandic *logi*, or flame. But he was an evil principle, and represented rather the destructive than the creative powers of fire.

But the Scandinavians, mixing, like all the northern nations, their folk-lore into their mythology, invented legends of a skillful smith, beneath whose mighty blows upon the yielding iron swords of marvelous keenness and strength were forged, or by whose wonderful artistic skill diadems and bracelets and jewels of surpassing beauty were constructed. Hence the myth of a wonderfully cunning artist was found everywhere. The *Legend of the Smith* became the common property of all the Scandinavian and Teutonic nations, and was of so impressive a character that it continued to exist down to mediæval times, and traces of it have extended to the superstitions of the present day. May we not justly look to its influence for the prominence given by the old Masonic legendists to the Master Smith of King Hiram among the workmen of Solomon? ¹

Among the Scandinavians we have the *Legend of Völund*, whose story is recited in the *Völunddarkvitha*, or *Lay of Völund*, contained in the *Edda* of Sæmund. *Völund* (pronounced as if spelled *Wayland*) was one of three brothers, sons of an Elf-king, that is to say, of a supernatural race. The three brothers emigrated to Ulfdal, where they married three Valkyries, or choosers of the slain, maidens of celestial origin, the attendants of Odin, and who were similar to those of the Greek *Parcæ*, or Fates. After seven years the three wives fled away to pursue their allotted duty of visiting battle-fields. Two of the brothers went in search of their wandering wives; but *Völund* remained in Ulfdal. He was a skillful workman at the forge, and occupied his time in making works in gold and steel, while patiently awaiting the promised return of his beloved wife.

Niduth, the king of the country, having heard of the wonderful skill of *Völund* as a forger of metals, visited his home during

¹ See chapter xxxv, *Antiquities of Freemasonry*, by George F. Fort, Philadelphia, 1877, for an excellent presentation of legends based upon or akin to the one of Hiram.

his absence and secretly got possession of some of the jewels which he had made, and of the beautiful sword which the smith had made for himself.

Völund, on his return, was seized by the warriors of Niduth and conducted to the castle. There the queen, terrified at his fierce looks, ordered him to be hamstrung, the muscle back of the ankle to be cut through. Thus, crippled and without the power of escape or resistance, he was confined to a small island near the royal residence and compelled to make jewels for the queen and her daughter, and weapons of war for the king.¹

We need not tell all the adventures of the smith while confined in his island prison. It is sufficient to say that, having made a pair of wings by which he was enabled to fly (and here we are reminded of the Greek fable of *Dædalus*), he made his escape, having by a trick first dishonored the princess and slain her two brothers.

This legend of "a curious and cunning workman" at the forge was so popular in Scandinavia that it spread into other countries, where the *Legend of the Smith* presents itself under various forms.

In the Icelandic Legend, *Völund* is described as a great artist in the working of iron, gold, and silver. It does not, however, connect him with heavenly beings, but credits to him great skill in his art, in which he is assisted by the power of magic.

The Germans had the same Legend at a very early period. In the German Legend the artificer is called *Wieland*, and he is represented as the son of a giant named Wade. He acquires the art of a smith from Minner, a skillful workman, and is perfected by the Dwarfs in all his operations at the forge as an armorer and goldsmith. He goes of his own accord to the king, who is here called Nidung, where he finds another skillful smith, named *Amilias*, with whom he fights in battle, and kills him with his sword, Mimung. For this offense he is crippled by the king, and then the rest of the story proceeds very much like that of the Scandinavian Legend.

Among the Anglo-Saxons the Legend is found not varying much from the original type. The story where the hero receives

¹ All these smiths of mythology and folk-lore are represented as being lame, like *Hephaestus*, who we are told broke his leg in falling from heaven.

the name of *Weland* is contained in an ancient poem, of which fragments, unfortunately, only remain. The Legend had become so familiar to the people that in the metrical romance of *Beowulf* the coat of mail of the hero is described as the work of *Weland*; and King Alfred, in his translation of the *Consolation of Philosophy*, by Boethius, where the author refers to the bones of the Consul Fabricius, in the passage "*Ube sunt ossa Fabricie?*" (Where now are the bones of Fabricius?), thus changes over the question: "Where now are the bones of the wise *Weland*, the goldsmith that was formerly so famed?" Geoffrey of Monmouth afterward, in a Latin poem, speaks of the gold, and jewels, and cups that had been made by *Weland*, which name he Latinizes as *Gueilandus*.

In the old French chronicles we repeatedly meet the Legend of the skillful smith, though, as might be expected, the name undergoes many changes. Thus, in a poem of the 6th century, entitled *Gautier à la main forte*, or *Walter of the strong hand*, it is said that in a combat of Walter de Varkastein he was protected from the lance of Randolf by a breast plate or cuirass made by *Wieland*.

Another chronicle, of the 12th century, tells us that a Count of Angoulême, in a battle with the Normans, cut the cuirass and the body of the Norman King in two at a single stroke, with his sword *Durissima*, which had been made by the smith *Walander*. A chronicle of the same period, written by the monk John of Marmontier, describes the fine equipment of Geoffrey Plantagenet, Duke of Normandy, among which, says the author, was "a sword taken from the royal treasury and long since renowned. *Galannus*, the most skillful of armorers, had employed much labor and care in making it." *Galans*, for *Walans* (the *G* being substituted for the *W*, a letter unknown in the French alphabet), is the name bestowed in general on this skillful smith. The romances of the Trouvères and Troubadours of northern and southern France, in the 12th and 13th centuries, have many references to swords of wondrous keenness and strength that were forged by him for the knights and nobles.

Whether the name was given as *Völund*, or *Wieland*, or *Weland*, or *Galans*, it found its common origin in the Icelandic *Völundr*, which signifies a *smith*. It is a class or general term, from which the mythical name has been taken. So the Greeks called the

skillful workman, the smith of their folk-lore, *Dædalus*, because there is a verb in their language *daidallo*, which means *to do skillful or ornamental work*.

Here it may be well to notice the curious fact that along with these legends of a skillful smith there ran in the Middle Ages others, of which King Solomon was the subject. In many of these old romances and metrical tales, a skill is credited to King Solomon which makes him the rival of any of the workmen. Indeed, the artistic fame of Solomon was a proverb at the very time when these legends of the smith were most common. In the poems of those days we meet with repeated uses of the expression "*L'œuvre Salemon*," or "*The work of Solomon*," to indicate any production of great artistic beauty.

So fully had the Scandinavian sagas, the German chronicles, and the French romances spoken of this mythical smith that the idea became familiar to the common people, and was handed down in the popular superstitions and the folk-lore, to a comparatively modern period. Two of these, one from Germany and one from England, will serve us as examples, and show the general identity of the legends and the probability of their common origin.¹

Herman Harrys, in his *Tales and Legends of Lower Saxony*, tells the story of a smith who dwelt in the village of Hagen, on the side of a mountain, about two miles from Osnabrück. He was celebrated for his skill in forging metals; but, being discontented with his lot, and murmuring against God, he was supernaturally carried into a cave or cleft of the mountain, where he was condemned to be a metal-king, and, resting by day, to labor at night at the forge for the benefit of men, until the mine in the mountain should cease to furnish him with stock for that purpose.

In the coolness of the mine, says the Legend, his good disposition returned, and he labored with great industry, extracting ore from its veins, and at first forging household and agricultural implements. Afterwards he confined himself to the shoeing of horses for the neighboring farmers. In front of the cavern was a

¹ For many of the details of these two legends, as well as for much that has already been said of the mythological smith of the Middle Ages, see the learned Dissertation of MM. Depping and Michel on "*Wayland Smith*," ably translated from the French, with additions by S. W. Singer, London, 1847. Also note that our good brother, Sir Walter Scott, makes use of the traditions regarding the Legend of the Smith in his story "*Kenilworth*."

stake fixed in the ground, to which the countryman fastened the horse which he wished to have shod, and on a stone near by he laid the necessary fee. He then retired. On returning in due time he would find the task completed; but the smith, or, as he was called, the *Hiller*, that is, the *Hider*, would never permit himself to be seen.

Similar to this story is the English Legend, which tells us that in a vale of Berkshire, at the foot of White Horse Hill, from the stones which lay scattered around evidently the site of a Druidic monument, formerly dwelt a person named *Wayland Smith*. It is easily understood that here the handicraft title has been tied up with the Anglicized or Englished name, and that it is the same as the mediæval *Weland*, the Smith. No one ever saw him, for the huge stones afforded him a hiding-place. He, too, was a *Hiller*; for the word in the preceding Legend does not mean "The man of the hill," but is from the German *hüllen*, to cover or conceal, and denotes the man who conceals himself. In this studious concealment of their persons by both of these smiths we detect the common origin of the two legends. When his services were required to shoe a horse, the animal was left among the stones and a piece of money placed on one of them. The owner then retired, and after some time had elapsed he returned, when he found that the horse was shod and the money had disappeared. The English reader ought to be familiar with this story from the use made of it by Brother Sir Walter Scott in his novel of *Kenilworth*.

It is very evident, from all that has been here said, that the smith, as the maker of weapons for the battle-field and jewels for the *boudoir*, as well as implements of agriculture and household use, was a most important personage in the earliest times, esteemed as a god by the ancients, and invested by the moderns with more than human qualities. It is equally evident that this respect for the smith as an artificer was common in the Middle Ages. But in the very latest legends, by a customary process of decay in all traditions, when the stream becomes muddy as it proceeds onward, he descended in character from a skilled forger of splendid swords, his earliest occupation, to be a shoer of horses, which was his last.

We must bear in mind, also, that in the Middle Ages the respect for the smith as a "curious and cunning" workman began by the introduction of a new element, brought by the Crusaders

and Pilgrims from the East to be shared with King Solomon, who was supposed to be invested with equal skill.

It is not, therefore, strange that the idea should have been put into the rituals of the various secret societies of the Middle Ages, and adopted by the Freemasons, at first by the Operative branch and afterward, in a more enlarged form, by the Speculative Freemasons.

In all of the old manuscript constitutions of the Operative Freemasons we find the *Legend of the Craft*, and with it, except in one instance, and that the earliest, a reference to *Tubal Cain* as the one who "found [that is, invented] the Smith Craft of gold and silver, iron and copper and steel."

Nothing but the universal circulation of the mediæval Legend of the Smith, *Völund* or *Weland*, can account for this reference to the Father of Smith Craft in a Legend which should have been credited to Stone Craft. There is no connection between the forge and the trowel which authorized on any other ground the honor paid by stone-masons to a forger of metals — an honor so marked that in time the very name of *Tubal Cain* came to be adopted as a significant and important word in the Masonic ritual, and the highest place in the traditional labors of the Temple was given to a worker in gold and brass and iron.

Afterward, when the Operative Art was superseded by the Speculative Science, the latter added to the simple *Legend of the Craft* the more complex *Legend of the Temple*. In this latter Legend, the name of that Hiram whom the King of Tyre had sent with all honor to the King of Israel, to give him aid in the construction of the Temple, is first introduced under his Bible name and title. But this is not the first time that this personage is made known to the Fraternity. In the older legends he is mentioned always with a different name but always, also, as "King Solomon's Master Mason."

In the beginning of the 18th century, when what has been called the Revival took place, there was a continuation of the general idea that he was the chief Mason at the Temple. But the true name of Hiram Abif is, as we have already said, then first found in a written or printed record. Anderson speaks of his architectural abilities in exaggerated terms. He calls him in one place "The most accomplished Mason on earth," and in another

"The prince of architects." This character has adhered to him in all the later times, and the unwritten Legend of the present day represents him as the "Chief Builder of the Temple," the "Operative Grand Master," and the "Skillful Architect" by whose skillful designs on his trestle-board the Craft were guided in their labors and the edifice was constructed.

Now, it will be profitable in the investigation of historic truth to compare these qualities credited to Hiram Abif by the older and more recent legendists with the biblical accounts of the same person which have already been cited.

In the original Hebrew text of the passage in the Book of *Chronicles*, the words which refer to the craftsmanship or trade of Hiram Abif are *khoresh nekhoshet*; literally, a worker in brass. The Vulgate, which was the popular version in those days and from which the old legendists must have taken their knowledge of Bible history, thus translates the letter of King Hiram to King Solomon: "Therefore I have sent to thee a wise and most skillful man, Hiram the workman or smith, my father" — *Hiram fabrem patrem meum*.

Indeed, in the close of the verse in the Authorized Version he is described as being "cunning to work all works in brass." And hence Dr. Adam Clarke, in his *Commentaries*, calls him "a very intelligent coppersmith."

The position of the old legendists and the modern Masonic writers, in supposing him to have also been a stonemason or an architect, has arisen from the translation in the Authorized Version of the passage in *Chronicles* where he is said to have been "skillful to work in gold and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber." The words in the original are *Baabanim vebagnetsim*, in *stones* and in *woods*; that is, in *precious stones* and in *woods of various kinds*. That is to say, besides being a coppersmith, he was a lapidary and a carver and gilder. The words in the original Hebrew are in the plural, and therefore the translation "in wood and in timber" is not correct. Gesenius says — and there is no better authority for a Hebraism — that the word *eben* is used by way of excellence, to denote a precious stone, and its plural, *abanim*, means, therefore, precious stones. In the same way *gnetz*, which in the singular signifies a tree, in the plural denotes *materials of wood*, for any purpose.

The work that was done by Hiram Abif in the Temple is fully recounted in the first Book of *Kings*, the seventh chapter, from the fifteenth to the fortieth verse, and is briefly retold in verses forty-one to fifty. It is also given in the third and fourth chapters of second *Chronicles*, and in both books care is taken to say that when this work was done the task of Hiram Abif was completed. In the first Book of *Kings* (vii, 40) it is said: "So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made King Solomon for the house of the Lord." In the second Book of *Chronicles* (iv, 2) the statement is repeated thus: "And Hiram finished the work that he was to make for King Solomon for the house of God."

The same authority leaves us in no doubt as to what that work was to which the skill of Hiram Abif had been devoted. "It was," says the Book of *Chronicles*, "the two pillars, and the pommels and the chapiters which were on the top of the pillars; and four hundred pomegranates on the two wreaths; two rows of pomegranates on each wreath, to cover the two pommels of the chapiters which were upon the pillars. He made also bases, and lavers made he upon the bases; one sea and twelve oxen under it. The pots also, and the shovels and the flesh hooks and all their instruments, did Hiram his father (Hiram Abif) make to King Solomon, for the house of the Lord, of bright brass."

Enough has been said to show that the labors as mainly reported to us of Hiram Abif in the Temple were those of a worker in brass and in precious stones, in carving and in gilding, and not those of a stonemason. He was to the writers of the Bible accounts more the decorator than the builder of the Temple. He owes the position which he holds in the legends and in the ritual of Freemasonry, not so much to any connection which he had with the art of architecture, but, like Tubal Cain, to his skill in bringing the power of fire under his control and applying it to the forging of metals.

The high honor paid to him is the result of the influence of that *Legend of the Smith*, so universally spread in the Middle Ages, which recounted the wondrous deeds of *Völund*, or *Wieland*, or *Wayland*. The smith was, in the mediæval traditions, in the sagas of the north and in the romances of the south of Europe, the maker of swords and coats of mail. In the legends of Free-

masonry he was changed into the maker of holy vessels and sacred implements.

But the idea that of all handicrafts smith-craft was the greatest was retained by the Freemasons when they elevated the skillful smith of Tyre, the "cunning" worker in brass, to the highest place as a builder in their Temple Legend.

The spirit of critical image-breaking, which strips the outer rind or husk from the historic germ of all myths and legends, has been doing much to clear the history of Freemasonry of all fables and guesses. This attempt to give to Hiram Abif his true position, and to define his real profession, is in the spirit of that acid test of truth.

But the doctrine here advanced is not intended to affect in the slightest degree the part assigned to Hiram Abif in the symbolism of the Third Degree. Whatever may have been his profession, he must have stood high in the confidence of the two kings, of him who sent him and him who received him, as "a master-workman"; and he might well be supposed to be entitled in an allegory to the exalted rank bestowed upon him in the *Legend of the Craft* and in the modern ritual.

Allegories are permitted to branch at will from the facts of history and the teachings of science. Trees may be made to speak, as they do in the most ancient fable that exists, and it is no trespass upon their character that a worker in brass may be changed into a builder in stone to suit a symbolic purpose.

Hence this "celebrated artist," as he is fairly called, whether smith or mason, or whether as father and son there are two, the one more the architect and the other more the smith, is still the representative, in the symbolism of Freemasonry, of the abstract idea of man laboring in the temple of life, and the symbolic lesson of his tried faithfulness and his unhappy fate is still the same.

When we view the whole Legend as a myth intended to give expression to a symbolic idea, we may be content to call him an architect, the first of Freemasons, and the chief Builder of the Temple; but as students of history we can know nothing of him and admit nothing concerning him that is not supported by authentic and undisputed authority.

While many may smile at the old idea that Freemasonry had a gild or association in the days of Solomon it is only fair to say that in Bible times trade and craft societies were not rare.¹ Their places of business were even set apart and distinct. Briefly, then, note the tannery by the sea in *Acts*, x, 32; the fullers' field of *Isaiah*, vii, 3; the bakers' street of *Jeremiah*, xxxvii, 21, etc. The "Valley of Craftsmen" mentioned in *Nehemiah*, xi, 35, deserves special note. Moreover, as to societies, see the "son of the apothecaries" in *Nehemiah*, iii, 8, and "son of the goldsmiths" of *Nehemiah*, iii, 31, also "sons of the porters" and "sons of the prophets," in *Ezra*, ii, 42; and the linenweavers and potters of 1 *Chronicles*, iv, 21, and the gild of silversmiths at Ephesus where Demetrius "called together the workmen of like occupation, and said, 'Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth,'" *Acts*, xix, 24-27. "Sons of" suggests that trades were handed down in families from father to son and this also intimates an old origin for the son, the Lewis, being in Freemasonry given special favor in an initiation earlier in age than other candidates.

¹See also Macalister on "The Craftsmen's Gild," Palestine Exploration Fund Statement, 1905, p. 243, and Kennedy in James Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible," pp. 53-54.

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

THE LELAND MANUSCRIPT



THE *Leland Manuscript* is so called because it is said to have been discovered by the celebrated antiquary John Leland. Sometimes it is called the *Locke Manuscript* in consequence of the notes that are believed by many to have been attached to it by that philosopher.¹ This manuscript since the middle of the 18th century attracted the attention and excited the discussion of Masonic students. After having been mentioned with hearty approval by such writers as Preston, Hutchinson, Oliver, and Krause, it has suffered a decline to some extent of that esteem under the keen examination of later critics. It has by many of these been concluded to be a forgery.

Whether this manuscript be an authentic section of history or as Brother Mackey held it to be, a "pious fraud" intended to strengthen the claim of the Order to a great antiquity and to connect it with the mystical schools of the ancients, is today not easy to clearly and completely determine. But as it proposes a theory concerning the origin of the institution, which was long accepted as a Legend of the Order, it is entitled to a place in the legendary history of Freemasonry.

The story of this manuscript and the way in which it was brought to the notice of the Craft is a singular one.

The *Gentleman's Magazine*, September, 1753, printed the so-called manuscript probably for the first time. The manuscript appeared in print under the title of "Certayne Questyons with

¹ John Locke, born 1632, died 1704, famous philosopher, practiced medicine but became secretary to Lord Ashley and on his fall from power was compelled to leave England. Late in life he won European fame as thinker and writer. His "Essay concerning Human Understanding" examines the nature and extent of our abilities in thought and in his "Letter on Toleration" he argues that there should be no disability upon religious belief. Locke's works greatly influenced Addison, Hume, and later authors.

Answers to the same, Concernynge the Mystery of Maconrye, wrytten by the Hande of Kynge Henrye the Sixthe of the Name, and faythfullye copyed by me Johan Leylande Antiquarius, by the Commaunde of His Highnesse." That is, rewritten by order of King Henry the Eighth, by whom Leland was employed to search for antiquities in the libraries of cathedrals, abbeys, priories, colleges, and all places where any ancient records were to be found.

The article in the *Gentleman's Magazine* is headed with these words:

"The following Treatise is said to be printed at Frankfort, Germany, 1748, under the following Title: Ein Brief von dem berühmten Johann Locke, betreffend die Freimaurerei. So auf einem Schreib-Tisch eines verstorbenen Bruders ist gefunden worden. *That is*, A Letter of the famous John Locke relating to Freemasonry; found on the Writing Table of a deceased Brother."

The claim, therefore, is that this document was first published at Frankfort in 1748, five years before it appeared in England. But this German original has never been produced. The laborious learning of Krause would certainly have enabled him to discover it, had it ever been within his reach. But his failure is not a proof of more than his inability to find the manuscript and indeed he does not regard this result as fatal to the standing of the facts asserted by the article in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. But, although he accepts the so-called manuscript as authentic, he does not refer to the Frankfort copy, but admits that, so far as he knows, it first made its appearance in Germany in 1780, in J. G. L. Meyer's translation of Preston's *Illustrations*.¹

Kloss, it is true, in his *Bibliography*, gives the title in German, with the imprint of "Frankfort, 12 pages." But he himself says that the actual existence of such a document is to be wholly doubted.²

Besides, it is not unusual with Kloss to give the titles of books that he has never seen, and for whose existence he had no other authority than the casual or offhand remark of some other writer. Thus he gives the titles of the *Short Analysis of the Unchanged Rites and Ceremonies of Freemasons*, said to have been printed in 1676, and the *Short Charge*, credited to 1698, two books which

¹ "Kunsturkunden der Freimaurerei," I, 14.

² "Bibliographie der Freimaurerei," No. 329.

have never been found. But he applies to them the epithet of "doubtful" as he does to the Frankfort edition of the *Leland Manuscript*.

Before proceeding to an examination of the external and internal evidence of the true character of this document, we will give a sketch of its contents.

It is introduced by a letter from John Locke (author of the *Essay on the Human Understanding*), said to be addressed to the Earl of Pembroke, under date of May 6, 1696, in which he states that by the help of Mr. C——ns he had obtained a copy of the MS. in the Bodleian Library, which he therewith had sent to the Earl. It is accompanied by many notes made the day before by Locke for the reading of Lady Masham, who had become very fond of Masonry. He says "She now more than ever wishes herself a man, that she might be capable of admission into the Fraternity."

Locke says: "The *manuscript* of which this is a copy, appears to be about 160 years old. Yet (as your Lordship will observe by the title) it is itself a copy of one yet more ancient by about 100 years. For the original is said to have been the handwriting of K. H. VI. Where the Prince had it is at present an uncertainty, but it seems to me to be an examination (taken perhaps before the king) of some one of the Brotherhood of Masons; among whom he entered himself, as 'tis said, when he came out of his minority, and thenceforth put a stop to the persecution that had been raised against them."

The "examination," for such it purports to be, as Locke supposes, consists of twelve questions and answers. The style and orthography is similar to the language of the 15th century.

Freemasonry is described to be the skill of Nature, the understanding of the might that is therein and its various operations, besides the skill of numbers, weights and measures, and the true manner of fashioning all things for the use of man, principally dwellings and buildings of all kinds, and all other things useful to man.

Its origin is said to have been with the first men of the East, who were before the Man of the West, by which Locke,¹ in his note,

¹ In this and other places we cite the name of Locke as if he were really the author of the note, a theory to which objection may be made. The reference in this way is merely for convenience.

says is meant Pre-Adamites, the "Man of the West" being Adam. The Phœnicians, who first came from the East into Phœnicia, are said to have brought it westwardly by the way of the Red and Mediterranean seas.

It was brought into England by Pythagoras, who is called in the document "Peter Gower," evidently from the French spelling of the name, "Pétagore," he having traveled in search of knowledge into Egypt, Syria, and every other land where the Phœnicians had planted Freemasonry. Having obtained a knowledge of the art in the Lodges of Freemasons where he gained admission, on his return to Europe he settled in Magna Grecia (the name given by the ancients to Southern Italy), and established a Grand Lodge at Crotona, one of its principal cities, where he made many Freemasons. Some of these traveled into France and made many other Freemasons, whence in process of time the art passed over into England.

Such is the history of the origin and progress of Freemasonry given in the *Leland Manuscript*. The remainder of the document gives the character and the objects of the institution.

Thus it is said, in relation to secrecy, that Freemasons have at all times communicated to mankind such of their secrets as might generally be useful, and have kept back only those that might be harmful in evil hands — those that could be of no use unless accompanied by the teachings of the Lodge, and those which are employed to bind the brethren more strongly together.

The arts taught by Freemasons to mankind are said to be Agriculture, Architecture, Astronomy, Geometry, Arithmetic, Music, Poetry, Chemistry, Government, and Religion.

Freemasons are said to be better teachers than other men, because the first of them received from God the art of finding new arts, and of teaching them, whereas the discoveries of other men have been but few, and acquired only by chance. This art of discovery the Freemasons conceal for their own profit. They also conceal the art of working miracles, the art of foretelling future events, the art of changes (which Locke interprets as signifying the ability to alter one metal into another, the transmutation of metals), the method of acquiring the faculty of *Abrac*, the power of becoming good and perfect without the aid of fear and hope, and the universal language.

Lastly, it is admitted that Freemasons do not know more than other men, but only have a better opportunity of knowing it, in which many fail for want of capacity and industry. As to their virtue, it is acknowledged that some are not so good as other men, yet it is believed that for the most part they are better than they would be if they were not Freemasons. And it is claimed that Freemasons greatly love each other, because good and true men, knowing each other to be such, always love the more the better they are.

“And here endethe the Questyones and Awnsweres.”

There does not appear to be any great novelty in this document. The theory of the origin of Freemasonry had been advanced by others before its appearance in public, and Freemasonry had been previously defined. But it was eagerly seized as a treasure, and was soon accepted as a genuine relic of the early age of English Freemasonry and put into its history, a position that it has not yet lost, in the opinion of some.

Of the publications of this document, so much as this is known:

As we have seen, it appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1753. Kloss records a book as published in 1754, with no place of publication, probably London, having the title of *A Masonic Creed, with a curious letter by Mr. Locke*. This we can hardly doubt, was the *Leland Manuscript* with a new title. In 1756 it was printed in Entick's edition of the *Constitutions* and in Dermott's *Ahiman Rezon*; in 1763, in the *Free-Masons' Pocket Companion*; in 1769, in Wilkinson's *Constitutions* of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, and in Calcott's *Candid Disquisition*; in 1772, in Huddesford's *Life of Leland*, and in Preston's *Illustrations of Masonry*; in 1775, in Hutchinson's *Spirit of Masonry*; and in 1784, in Northouck's edition of the *Constitutions*.

In Germany it first appeared in 1776, says Krause, in J. G. L. Meyer's translation of Preston; in 1780, in a translation of Hutchinson, published at Berlin; in 1805, in the *Magazin für Freimaurer* of Professor Seehass; in 1807, in the collected Masonic works of Fessler; in 1810, by Dr. Krause in his *Three Oldest Documents*; and in 1824, by Mossdorf in his edition of Lenning's *Encyclopädie*.

In France, Thory published a translation of it, with some comments of his own, in 1815, in the *Acta Latomorum*.

In America it was, so far as we know, first published in 1783, in Smith's *Ahiman Rezon* of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania; it was also published in 1817, by Cole, in his *Ahiman Rezon* of Maryland, and it has been copied into several other works.

In none of these republications, with one or two exceptions, is there the slightest doubt of the genuineness of the document. It was on the contrary, almost everywhere accepted as authentic, and as the detail of an actual examination of a Freemason or a company of Freemasons, made by King Henry VI. of England, or some of his ministers, in the 15th century.

Of all who have cited this manuscript, Dr. Carl Christian Friederich Krause is among the most learned, and the one we should naturally expect most capable of detecting a literary forgery, but he speaks of it, in his great work on *The Three Oldest Documents of the Fraternity of Freemasons*, as being a remarkable and instructive document and as among the oldest known to us. In England, he says, it is, so far as it is known to him, accepted as authentic by the learned as well as by the whole body of the Craft, without a dissenting voice. He refers to the fact that the Grand Lodge of England formally admitted it into its *Book of Constitutions*, while the Grand Lodge of Scotland approved the work of Lawrie, where its authenticity is supported by new proofs.

Mossdorf, whose warm and intimate relations with Krause influenced perhaps his views on this as they did on other Masonic subjects, has expressed a like favorable opinion of the *Leland Manuscript*. In his additions to the *Encyclopädie* of Lenning, he calls it a remarkable document, which, notwithstanding a singularity about it, and its impression of the ancient time in which it originated, is instructive, and the oldest catechism which we have on the origin, the nature, and the design of Freemasonry.

The editor of Lawrie's *History* is equally satisfied of the genuine character of this document, to which he confidently refers as conclusive evidence that Dr. Plot was wrong in saying that Henry VI. did not patronize Freemasonry.

Dr. Oliver, as might be expected from his peculiar notions in respect to the early events of Freemasonry, was a most ardent defender of the manuscript, although he candidly admits "There is some degree of mystery about it, and doubts have been entertained whether it be not a forgery."

Considering its publicity at a time when Freemasonry was beginning to excite a considerable share of public attention, and that the deception, if there was one, would have been publicly exposed by the opponents of the Order, he thinks that their silence is a proof that the document is genuine.

"Being thus universally diffused," he says, "had it been a suspected document, its exposure would have been certainly attempted;—if a forgery, it would have been unable to have endured the test of a critical examination. But no such attempt was made, and the presumption is that the document is authentic."

On the other hand, there are other writers who have as carefully investigated the subject, but whose studies have led them to the conclusion that the document never had any existence until the middle of the 18th century, and that the effort to place it in the time of Henry VI. is, as Mounier calls it, "a Masonic fraud."

As early as 1787, while the English Freemasons were receiving it as a document of approved truth, the French critics had begun to doubt its genuineness. At a meeting of the Philalethes, a rite of Hermetic Freemasonry instituted at Paris in 1775, the Marquis de Chefdebien read a paper entitled *Masonic researches for the use of the Primitive Rite of Narbonne*.¹ In this paper he presented an unfavorable criticism of the *Leland Manuscript*. In 1801 M. Mounier published an essay *On the Influence attributed to the Philosophers, the Freemasons and the Illuminati in the French Revolution*,² in which he pronounces the document to be a forgery and a Masonic fraud.

Lessing was the first of the German critics who attacked the genuineness of the document. This he did in his *Ernst und Falk*, the first edition of which was published in 1778. Others followed, and the German unfavorable criticisms were closed by Findel, the editor of the *Bauhütte*, and author of a *History of Freemasonry*, first published in 1865, and translated in 1869, by Bro. Lyon. He says: "There is no reliance, whatever, to be placed on any assertions based on this spurious document; they all crumble to dust. Not even in England does any well-informed Freemason

¹ "Recherches Maçonniques à l'usage des Frères du Régime Primitif de Narbonne."

² "De l'Influence attribuée aux Philosophes, aux Franc-Maçons et aux Illuminés sur la Révolution de France," per F. F. Mounier.

of the present day believe in the genuineness of this bungling composition."

The first attack upon it in England was made in 1849, by George Sloane, in his *New Curiosities of Literature*. Sloane was not a Freemason. His criticism, vigorous as it is, seems to have been inspired rather by a feeling of dislike to the institution than by an honest desire for the truth. Bro. A. F. A. Woodford is more cautious in the expression of his judgment, but admits that "We must give up the actual claim of the document to be a *manuscript* of the time of King Henry VI., or to have been written by him or copied by Leland." Yet he thinks "it not unlikely that we have in it the remains of a Lodge catechism conjoined with a Hermetic one."

A nameless writer, in the *Masonic Magazine*,¹ London, gave an able though brief review of the arguments for and against the external evidence of authenticity, and concluded that the former utterly failed.

Amid such conflicting views, an investigation must be conducted with impartiality. The influence of great names, especially among the German writers, has been enlisted on both sides, and the most careful judgment must be exercised in determining which of these sides is right and which is wrong.

In the investigation of the genuineness of any document we must have resort to two kinds of evidence, the external and the internal. The former is usually more clear and precise, as well as more easily handled, because it is on the surface of things and easily understood by the most unpracticed judgment. When there is no doubt about the meaning, and there is a proper exercise of skill, internal evidence is freer from doubt, and therefore the most conclusive. It is, says a writer on the history of our language, the pure reason of the case, speaking to us directly, by which we can not be deceived, if we only rightly understand it. Although we must sometimes dispense with external evidence, because it may be out of our reach, while the internal evidence is always present, yet the combination of the two will make the conclusion to which we arrive more certain than it could be by the application of either kind alone.

If it should be claimed that a particular document was written in a certain century, the mention of it, or the use of extracts

¹ Vol. vi, No. 64, October, 1878, p. 148.

from it, by authors of that time would be the best external evidence of its genuineness. It is thus that the New Testament was strengthened in authority, by the quotation of many passages of the Gospels and the Epistles to be found in the authentic writings of the early Fathers of the Church. This is the external evidence.

If the language of the document under consideration, the peculiar style, and the ancient words used in it should be those found in other documents known to have been written in the same century, and if the sentiments are those that we should expect from the author, are in accord with the age when he lived, this would be internal evidence and entitled to great weight.

But this internal evidence is subject to one fatal defect. The style and language of the period and the sentiments of the pretended author and of the age in which he lived may be successfully imitated by a skillful forger, and then the evidence is misleading. So Chatterton palmed upon the world the supposed productions of the monk Rowley, and Ireland forged pretended plays of Shakespeare. Each of these made close imitations of the style of the authors whose lost works they claimed to have discovered.

When the imitation has not been successful, or when there has been no imitation attempted, the use of words unknown at the date claimed for the document in dispute, or the reference to events of which the writer must be ignorant, because they occurred at a later period, or when the sentiments are not in tune with the age in which they are supposed to have been written, then the internal evidence that it is a forgery, or at least a production of a later date, becomes convincing.

By these two classes of evidence Brother Mackey sought to ascertain the true character of the *Leland Manuscript*. His argument follows:

If it can be shown that there is no evidence of the existence of the document before the year 1753, and if it can also be shown that neither the language of the document, the sentiments expressed in it, nor the character credited to the chief actor, King Henry VI., conform with documents of the 15th century, we shall be justified in rejecting the theory as wholly unsound that it belongs to such a period. But in arriving at a fair conclusion, the rule of Ulpian, the Roman expert on the law, must be obeyed, and the testimonies well considered and not merely counted. Not

the number of the whole but the weight of each must control our judgment.

Those who defend the genuineness of the *Leland Manuscript* approve of these points:

1. The document was first printed at Frankfort, in Germany, whence it was copied into the *Gentleman's Magazine* for September, 1753.

2. The original manuscript was, by command of King Henry VIII., copied by John Leland from an older document of the time of Henry VI.

3. This original manuscript, of which Leland made the copy, was written by King Henry VI.

4. The manuscript of Leland was placed in the Bodleian Library.

5. A copy of this manuscript of Leland was made by a Mr. C——ns, said to mean Collins, and given to John Locke.

6. Locke wrote notes on it in the year 1696, which were published in Frankfort in 1748, and in England in 1753.

Brother Mackey holds that the failure to establish by competent proof any one of these six points will seriously affect a belief in the whole story, for each of them is a link of one continuous chain. He submits the following:

1. Now as to the first point, *that the document was first printed at Frankfort in the year 1748*. The Frankfort copy has never yet been seen, notwithstanding diligent search has been made for it by German writers, who were the most capable of discovering it, if it had ever existed. The negative evidence is strong that the Frankfort copy may be justly considered as a mere myth. It follows that the article in the *Gentleman's Magazine* is an original document, and we have a right to suppose that it was written at the time for some purpose, to be hereafter considered, for, as the author of it has given a false reference, we may conclude that if he had copied it at all he would have furnished us with the true one. Kloss, it is true, has admitted the title into his catalogue, but he has borrowed his description of it from the article in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and speaks of this Frankfort copy as being very doubtful. He evidently had never seen it, though he was a tireless searcher after Masonic books. Krause's account of it is, that it first was found worthy of Locke's notice in England; that

thence it passed over into Germany — “how, he does not know” — appeared in Frankfort, and then returned to England, where it was printed in 1753. But all this is mere hearsay, and taken by Krause from the statement in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. He makes no reference to the Frankfort copy in his copious notes in the *Kunsturkunden*, and, like Kloss, had no personal knowledge of any such publication. In short, there is no positive evidence at all that any such document was printed at Frankfort-on-the-Main, but abundant negative evidence that it was not. Thus, Brother Mackey says, the first point must be abandoned.

2. The second point is *that the manuscript was, by command of King Henry VIII., copied by John Leland from an older document of the age of Henry VI.* Now, there is not the slightest evidence that a manuscript copy of the original document was made by Leland, except what is afforded by the article in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the authenticity of which is the very question in dispute, and it is a good maxim of the law that no one ought to be a witness in his own cause. Even this evidence is very insufficient. Admitting that Locke was really the author of the annotations (an assertion which also needs proof), he does not say that he had seen the Leland copy, but only a copy of it, made for him by a friend. So that even at that time the *Leland Manuscript* had not appeared and up to this time has never been seen. Amid all the laborious researches of Bro. Hughan in the British Museum, in other libraries, and in the archives of lodges, while he has discovered many valuable old records and Masonic Constitutions hidden in these various places, he has failed to unearth the famous *Leland Manuscript*.

Huddesford, in his *Life of Leland*, it is true, made the following statement about this manuscript: “It also appears that an ancient *manuscript* of Leland's has long remained in the Bodleian Library, unnoticed in any account of our author yet published. This Tract is entitled *Certayne Questyons with Awnsweres to the same concernynge the mystery of Maconrye*. The original is said to be the handwriting of K. Henry VI., by order of his highness K. Henry VIII.”¹ He then comments upon the importance of this “ancient monument of literature, *if its authenticity remains unquestioned.*”

¹ Huddesford's “Life of John Leland,” p. 67.

But Huddesford wrote in 1772, nineteen years after the appearance of the document in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which he quotes in his Appendix, and from which it is evident that he derived all the knowledge he had of the manuscript. The remarks on this subject of the unknown writer in the *London Masonic Magazine*, already referred to, are so apt and conclusive that they justify a quotation.

"Though Huddesford was Keeper of the Ashmolean Library, in the Bodleian, he does not seek to verify even the existence of the *manuscript*, but contents himself with 'it also appears' that it is from the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1753. He surely ought not to have put in here such a statement, that an ancient *manuscript* of Leland has long remained in the Bodleian, without inquiry or collation. Either he knew the fact to be so, as he stated it, or he did not; but in either case his carelessness as an editor is, to my mind, utterly inexcusable. Nothing would have been easier for him than to verify an alleged *manuscript* of Leland, being an officer in the very collection in which it was said to exist. Still, if he did not do so, either the *manuscript* did exist, and he knew it, but did not think well, for some reason, to be more explicit about it, or he knew nothing at all about it, and by an inexcusable neglect of his editorial duty, took no pains to ascertain the truth, and simply copied others, by his quasi recognition of a professed *manuscript* of Leland."

But it is utterly incredible that Huddesford could have known and yet concealed his knowledge of the existence of the *manuscript*. There is no conceivable motive that could be assigned for such concealment and for the citation at the same time of other authority for the fact. It is therefore a fair inference that his only knowledge of the document was derived from the *Gentleman's Magazine*. There is, therefore, no proof whatever that Leland ever copied any older manuscript.

Referring to certain obvious mistakes in the printed copy, such as *Peter Gower* for *Pythagoras*, it has been said that it is evident that the document was not printed from Leland's original transcript, but rather from a secondary copy by an unlearned writer. Huddesford adopts this view, but if he had ever seen the *manuscript* of Leland he could have better formed a judgment by comparing it with the printed copy than by a mere inference

that Leland could not have made such mistakes. As he did not do so, it follows that he never saw *Leland's Manuscript*.

3. The third point requiring proof is *that the original manuscript, of which Leland made a copy, was written by King Henry VI*. There is a legal rule that when a deed or writing is not produced in court, and the loss of it is not reasonably accounted for, it shall be treated as if it did not exist. This is just the case of the pretended manuscript in the handwriting of Henry VI. No one has ever seen that manuscript, no one has ever had any knowledge of it; the fact of its ever having existed depends solely on the statement made in the *Gentleman's Magazine* that it had been copied by Leland. Of a document "in the clouds" like this, whose very existence is a mere presumption built on the slightest foundation, it is absurd to predicate an opinion of the handwriting. Time enough when the manuscript is produced to inquire who wrote it.

4. The fourth point is *that the manuscript of Leland was deposited in the Bodleian Library*. This has already been discussed in the argument on the first and third points. It is sufficient now to say that no such manuscript has been found in that library. The writer in the *London Masonic Magazine*, already mentioned, says that he communicated with the authorities of the Bodleian Library, and was informed that nothing is known of it in that collection. Among the manuscripts of the British Museum are some that were once owned by Essex, an architect, who lived late in the 18th century. Among these is a copy of the *Leland Manuscript* — evidently a copy made by Essex from the *Gentleman's Magazine*, or some one of the other works where it had been printed. Evidently, says Brother Mackey, because in the same collection is a copy of the *Grand Mystery*, transcribed by him as he had transcribed the *Leland Manuscript*, as a curious relic. The original *Leland Manuscript* is nowhere to be found.

5. The fifth point is *that a copy of Leland's MS. was made by a Mr. C——ns, and given by him to Locke*. The *Pocket Companion* printed the name as "Collins," upon what authority is not explained. There were only two leading men of that name who were of the same period as Locke — John Collins, the mathematician, and Anthony Collins, the skeptic. It could not have been the former who took the copy from the Ashmolean Library

in 1696. He died in 1683. There is, however, a probability that the latter was meant by the writer of the preface, since he was on such relations with Locke as to be appointed one of his executors,¹ and it is ingenious, if the manuscript or rather the printed article is a forgery, that he should be selected to perform such an act of courtesy for his friend as to copy an old manuscript. Yet there is an uncertainty about it, and it is a puzzle to be resolved why Locke should have unnecessarily used such excess caution, and given only the initial and final letters of the name of a friend occupied in the harmless employment of copying for him a manuscript in a public library. This is mysterious, and mystery is always open to suspicion.

6. The sixth and last point is *that the notes were written by Locke in 1696, and fifty-two years afterward printed in Frankfort-on-the-Main*. We must add to this, because it is part of the story, that the English text, with the comments of Locke, said to have been translated into German, the question — was it translated by the unknown brother in whose desk the document was found after his death? — and then retranslated into English for the use of the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

It is admitted that if we can not accept the document printed in 1753 as genuine, it must follow that the notes supposed to have been written by Locke are also spurious. The two questions are not necessarily connected. Locke may have been deceived, and, believing in the manuscript presented to him by C——ns, or Collins, if that was his name, did take the trouble, for the sake of Lady Masham, to explain its difficulties.

But if we have shown that there is no sufficient proof, and, in fact, no proof at all, that there ever was such a manuscript, and therefore that Collins did not copy it, then it will necessarily follow that the pretended notes of Locke are as complete a forgery as the text to which they are attached. Now, if the comments of Locke were genuine, why is it that after diligent search this particular one has not been found? Locke left several manuscripts behind him, some were published after his death by his executors, King and Collins, and several unpublished writings

¹ It is strange that the idea that the Collins mentioned in the letter was Collins, the friend and executor of Locke, should not have suggested itself to any of the critics of the document. The writer in the *London Masonic Magazine* intimates that he was "a book-collector, or dealer in MSS."

went into the possession of Lord King, who in 1829 published the *Life and Correspondence of Locke*. But nowhere has the *Leland Manuscript* appeared. "If John Locke's letter were authentic," says the writer already repeatedly quoted, "a copy of this *manuscript* would remain among Mr. Locke's papers, or at Wilton House, and the original *manuscript* probably in the hands of this Mr. Collins, whoever he was, or in the Bodleian."

But there are other circumstances of suspicion connected with the letter and notes of Locke, which really condemn their authenticity. Concluding the remarks on what he calls "this old paper," Locke is made to say: "It has so raised my curiosity as to induce me to enter myself into the fraternity; which I am determined to do (if I may be admitted) the next time I go to London, and that will be shortly."

Because it is known that at the date of the above letter, Locke was residing at Oates, the home of Sir Francis Masham, for whose lady he says that the notes were made, and it is also known that in the next year he made a visit to London, Oliver says that there "he was initiated into Masonry." There is no proof of this initiation, nor is it important to the question of authenticity whether he was initiated or not, because if he was not it would only show that he had given up the intention suggested in the letter. But Brother Mackey mentions the unsupported remark of Dr. Oliver to show how Masonic history has too often been written — "always assumptions, and facts left to take care of themselves."

But it is really most probable that Locke was not made a Freemason in 1697 or at any other time. If he had been, Dr. Anderson, writing the history of Freemasonry only a few years afterward, would not have failed to have entered this noted name in the list of "learned scholars" who had favored the Fraternity.

It appears, from what is admitted in reference to this subject, that the *Leland Manuscript*, obtained by Collins from the Bodleian Library, was annotated by Locke, and a letter, stating the fact, was sent with the *manuscript* and notes to a nobleman whose rank and title are designated by stars (a needless mystery), but who has been supposed to be the Earl of Pembroke. All this was in 1696. Then it seems to have been lost to sight until 1748, when it is suddenly found hidden away in the desk of a deceased brother in Germany. During these fifty-two years that it lay con-

cealed, we hear nothing. Anderson, the Masonic historian, could not have heard of it. He does not mention it in either the edition of the *Constitutions*, published in 1723, or in that of 1738. If anyone knew of it, if it was in existence, it would have been Anderson, and if he had seen or heard of it he would have referred to it in his history of Freemasonry during the reign of Henry VI.

He does say that according to a record in the reign of Edward IV.: "The *charges* and *laws* of the Freemasons have been seen and perused by our late Sovereign, King Henry VI., and by the Lords of his most honourable Council, who have allowed them and declared that they be right good and reasonable to be holden as they have been drawn out and collected from the records of ancient times," etc.¹

But this is no description of the *Leland Manuscript*, which does not consist of "charges and laws," but is simply a history of the origin of Freemasonry, and a declaration of its character and objects. Yet the fact that there is said to have been something submitted by the Freemasons to Henry VI. and his Council was enough to suggest to the ingenious forger the idea of giving to his manuscript a date corresponding to the reign of that king. But, continues Brother Mackey, he overleaped the bounds of caution in giving the peculiar form to his forgery. Had he made a document similar to those ancient constitutions, many genuine manuscripts of which are extant, the discovery of the fraud would have been more difficult.

We are told: The *manuscript*, having been found in the desk of this unknown deceased brother, is forthwith published at Frankfort, Germany, in a pamphlet of twelve pages and in the German language. Here again there are questions to be asked, which can not be answered.

Was the letter of Locke, including of course the catechism of the *Leland Manuscript*, found in the desk of the unknown brother, the original document, or was it only a copy? If the latter, had it been copied in English by the brother, or translated by him into German? If not translated by him, by whom was it translated? Was the pamphlet printed in Frankfort merely a German translation, or did it also contain, in parallel columns, the English original, as Krause has printed the English documents in his *Kunst-*

¹ Anderson's "Constitutions," edition of 1738, p. 75.

urkunden, and as, in fact, he has printed this very document? These are questions of very great importance in determining the value and authenticity of the Frankfort pamphlet. Yet not one of them can be answered, simply because that pamphlet has never been found, nor is it known that anyone has ever seen it.

The pamphlet makes its appearance five years later in England, and in an English translation in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for September, 1753. Nobody can tell, or at least nobody has told, how it got there, who brought it over, who translated it from the German, how it happened that the ancient language of the text and the style of Locke have been preserved. These are facts necessary to be known in any investigation of the question of authenticity, and yet over them all a suspicious silence broods.

Until this silence is lifted and these questions answered by the gain of new knowledge, which it can hardly now be expected will be obtained, the stain of doubt or even fraud must remain upon the document. Brother Mackey further claims that the discoverer of a genuine manuscript would have been more clear and plain in his details.

As to internal evidence, there is difficulty in applying the standards of criticism which identify the age of the manuscript by its style.

Throwing aside any consideration of the Frankfort pamphlet on account of the impossibility of explaining the question of translation, and admitting, for the time, that Locke did really annotate a copy of a manuscript then in the Bodleian Library, which copy was made for him by his friend Collins, how, with this admission, will the case stand?

In Locke's letter (accepting it as such) he says: "The *manuscript*, of which this is a copy, appears to be about 160 years old." As the date of Locke's letter is 1696, this estimate would bring us to 1536, or the thirty-first year of the reign of Henry VIII. Locke could get his knowledge of this fact only in two ways: from the date given in the manuscript, or from its style and language as belonging, in his opinion, to that period.

If he derived his information from the date found at the head of the manuscript, that knowledge would be of no value, because it is the very question at issue. The writer of a forged document

would affix to it the date necessary to carry out his fraud, which of course would be no proof of genuineness.

But if Locke judged from the style, then it must be said that, though a great author, he never had any reputation as an expert in the judgment of old records. Of this we have a proof here, for the language of the *Leland Manuscript* is not that of the period in which Leland lived. Brother Mackey points out that the investigator may easily satisfy himself of this by comparing Leland's genuine works, or the Cranmer Bible, of the same date.

But it may be said that Locke judged of the date, not by the style, but by the date of the *manuscript* itself. This is probably true, because he adds: "Yet (as your Lordship will observe by the title) it is itself a copy of one yet more ancient by about 100 years: For the original is said to have been in the handwriting of K. H. VI."

Locke then judged by the title — a very insufficient proof. So Locke seems to have thought, for he limits the positiveness of the assertion by the qualifying phrase "it is said." If we accept this for what it is worth, the claim will be that the original manuscript was written in the reign of Henry VI., or about the middle of the 15th century. Here again, the language is not of that period. The new English, as it is called, was then taking that purer form which a century and a half later was shown in the vigorous style of Cawley. We find no such out-of-date terms, as those of this document, in the *Repressor of over-much Blaming of the Clergy*, of the same reign, about 1450, by Bishop Pecock, nor in the Earl of Warwick's petition to Duke Humphrey, in 1432, nor in any other of the writings of that period. It is not surprising, therefore, that the glossary or list of quaint words used in the document, by which from internal evidence we could fix its date, has, according to Brother Woodford, "always been looked upon with much suspicion by experts."

Brother Mackey says the style is a rather clumsy imitation of that of Sir John Mandeville, whose *Voiage and Travaile* was written in 1356, a century before the date set by the *Leland Manuscript*. An edition of this book was published at London in 1725. It was, therefore, within reach of the writer of the Leland document. He was aware of the necessity of giving an air of antiquity to his forgery, and yet not sufficiently informed to know

the rapid strides that had taken place in the progress of the language between the time of Mandeville and the middle of the reign of Henry VI. Brother Mackey goes on to say the forger adopted, to the best of his poor ability, the words of that most easily deceived of all travelers, supposing that it would well fit into the period he had selected for the date of his fraud. His ignorance of language progress is by Brother Mackey held to be conclusive. He in fact indorses the opinion of Halliwell-Phillips, that "it is but a clumsy attempt at deception, and quite a parallel to the recently discovered one of the first *Englishe Mercurie*." ¹

Brother Mackey concludes by saying "But the strangest thing in this whole affair is that so many men of learning should have permitted themselves to become the dupes of so bungling an impostor."

Brother Robert F. Gould, says that "all authorities, except Fort, concur in regarding (this mysterious document) as an impudent forgery. The conclusion I have myself arrived at is, that the catechism must have been drawn up at some period subsequent to the publication of Dr. Anderson's 'Constitutions'; and I think it not improbable that the memoir of Ashmole, given in the *Biographia Britannica* (1747) may have suggested the idea of practicing on the credulity of the Freemasons." ² A like opinion is given in his *Concise History of Freemasonry*. ³

Brother George F. Fort devotes one chapter to a study of the matter and says, "A careful examination of the pamphlet, republished by Krause, convinces me that it is genuine and entitled to full credence. Who the author was is uncertain, but it presents all the appearance, from the phraseology and antique orthography at least, of having been written as early as the middle of the 15th century. The traditions of the fraternity are also as accurately transmitted by this manuscript as by those which Masonic historians have accepted to be genuine. Among other legends which it contains, is one that the Venetians brought Freemasonry from the East. How closely this corresponds with the actual transmission of architectural art to the West readily appears. Whoever

¹ See J. O. Halliwell-Phillips, "Early History of Freemasonry in England," 1844, p. 43; also D'Israeli's "Curiosities of Literature," 1858, i, pp. 135-136.

² "History of Freemasonry," vol. II, chap. xi.

³ "Concise History of Freemasonry," chap. iii, pp. 221-222.

wrote the document in question, was profoundly learned in the secrets possessed by the Craft."¹

Brother George Fleming Moore also took vigorous exception to the methods formerly employed to determine the standing of the document. He says "We are not in possession of any new facts which would justify a reversal of this judgment (that of Brother Gould and other opponents) but the data on which the original sentence of condemnation was based seems wholly inadequate. Many of the arguments are trivial and puerile in the extreme, and some of them the result of prejudice against the High Degrees." After a review of the authorities, Brother Moore points out "This is a day when even our sacred books are made the target of destructive criticism. It is a 'fad,' and while we can not say the *Leland Manuscript* is genuine, we do say that most arguments against it are puerile, trivial, merely negative, or perhaps the result of prejudice."²

Brother Robert F. Gould, on further consideration, admitted that the reasons were conclusive for a rehearing of the case and also said that "if the manuscript can be proved, or even reasonably assumed to be a genuine one, then the words of Fort, Woodford, Albert Pike, and George F. Moore, with respect to the value of the text, are calculated to deeply impress the minds of all serious and unprejudiced students of the Craft."³

Brother Gould once held that there was no trace of any connection of Henry VI. and the Craft⁴ but later he states that "As will be seen, to the argument of anonymity, which has been advanced by the opponents of the 'Locke' MS., I attach no weight at all; and I shall now turn to that legendary patron of our Society, King Henry VI., whose alleged connection with the Freemasons in a traditionary or any other way, was long disputed, and therefore served to accentuate, as it were, the displeasure of these critics by whom the claim advanced on behalf of that Monarch (in the 'Locke' MS.), to figure as a Protector of the Craft, was rejected with contumely."

¹ "Early History and Antiquities of Freemasonry," 1877, pp. 417-430.

² *The New Age*, October, 1904.

³ "Essays on Freemasonry," 1913, pp. 265-267.

⁴ "Concise History of Freemasonry," p. 221.

WILLIAM R. SINGLETON



"The discovery, however, of that particular type of the 'Manuscript Constitutions,' of which the 'William Watson MS.' is a leading exemplar, has resulted in the full restoration of King Henry VI. to the position of a legendary Masonic dignitary, and one of the most learned Craftsmen of our own time — from whom I never venture to differ save with humility — Dr. W. Begemann, of Berlin, is firmly convinced that certain Charges and Regulations of the Masons were actually sanctioned and approved by 'Kynge Henrye the Sixthe of the Name.'"¹

At present, the manuscript is not in much better standing owing to the following:

"*The Philologist and the Forger* — The forger of literary and historical documents has many pitfalls in his path, but his fall is often long delayed. A forgery which for many years has found supporters is a Masonic treatise entitled 'Certayne Questyons . . . Concernynge Maconrye; wrytenne by . . . Kynge Henrye the Sixthe . . . and . . . copyed by me Johan Leylande,' published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1753, xxiii, 417, but stated to be a reprint of *Ein Brief von . . . Herrn Johann Locke* (Frankfurt, 1748), where it is said that the original manuscript is in the Bodleian Library. No such manuscript, however, has ever come to light and Mr. Madan, in his *Summary Catalogue*, refers to it as mythical. A student of Masonry recently made a special visit to Oxford with a view to a further search for the treatise, because, as he said, 'Masonically this is by no means as universally regarded as spurious as it was some thirty or so years ago.' Needless to say, he did not succeed where Mr. Madan had failed, but the authenticity of the text was still undecided. It occurred to a member of the Staff to ask Mr. Onions, one of the editors of the *New English Dictionary*, whether the treatise could possibly have been written as early as 1460. Mr. Onions kindly examined the text, and almost immediately denounced it as spurious on account of the occurrence of the word 'kymistrye' (Chemistry), which is not found in English until about the year 1600 and which did not become common until the middle of the seventeenth century. By such slips is the forger betrayed." — S.G. in the *Bodleian Quarterly Record*, Vol. III, No. 26, p. 27. See also the article by W. John Songhurst, *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, Vol. XXXII, Part 2, p. 142; 1919.

¹ "Essays on Freemasonry," p. 265.

HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

PRELIMINARY OUTLOOK



IF the reader has given attention to the preceding part of this work, he will have been enabled to discover that what we have here named "Pre-historic Freemasonry" is nothing more than a collection of legends and traditions taken from various sources and, probably, rearranged or invented at different periods during the Middle Ages, when the Fraternity of Freemasons was a thoroughly Operative Association, made up of architects and builders, with a few unprofessional men of rank and wealth, who had been accepted by the Craft as patrons or honorary members.

It is, however, only in accord with the custom of historians that we have planned to adopt the use of this word "prehistoric" in reference to the present subject, and not because we consider it to be an absolutely correct one when applied to the history of Freemasonry.

Anthropologists, these patient, plodding, probing students of a scientific knowledge of humanity, have divided the orderly series of events in every nation or race into two distinct periods — the prehistoric and the historic. The former includes the time when the inhabitants of a country were in a condition of utter barbarism, from which they gradually raised themselves to a higher state of civilization.

Of the fact even of the existence of such a rude and early people we have no evidence, except certain myths and legends, in which they appear to have put their ideas of religious belief, and, at a somewhat later period in their progress toward civilization, some fragmentary records, to be found principally in the

hieroglyphic monuments of ancient Egypt and in the cuneiform or wedge-shaped letters preserved in what is left to us of the engraved writings of old Assyria.

But when a nation or race began, by the natural process of advancement, to climb from this lower sphere of mental backwardness to a higher one, its first labor was to preserve in written records the evidences of its existence and the memorial of its acts and doings.

All that went before this era of passing from spoken traditions up to written records has been called by anthropologists the "prehistoric period" — all after it, the "historic."

Now, it is very evident that no such division can, in strictness, be applied to the history of Freemasonry. Viewed as an organized body of builders, when there ceases to be a record of the association, it must be supposed that it did not exist. There are no legends or traditions whose existence can be traced to a period before that which contains historic records of the society.

These legends and traditions were not, like the earliest myths of the prehistoric nations, the outgrowth of an uneducated religious sentiment wholly unconnected with and independent of any record of the events which occurred or were occurring at the same time.

On the contrary, they sprang up in the Middle Ages, at the very time when Freemasonry was making its lasting record in the history of Europe. They were made by Freemasons who had long before been recognized in history as an association of some importance. They were not the growth by some act of instinct and a developing reason in an early body of builders, known to us only by these legends which had been given from one to another by mouth-to-ear means from the prehistoric times. They were the inventions of a later period, most of the facts which they detailed being borrowed from historical records, principally from the Bible or from historians of the Church, and they were indebted for their making partly to a desire to magnify and to glorify the antiquity of the institution and partly to the influence of that legendary spirit prevailing in the Middle Ages, and which we find still more freely developed in the legends of the Saints accepted by the Roman Catholic Church.

These Masonic legends differ also in another respect from the prehistoric myths of oldest time.

As soon as a nation began to make its history, its myths were given their proper place in the region of mythology, and the history continued to be written without any mixture with them. They were considered as things of the past. They had their influence upon the religion of the people, but they were not intruded into its political history.

But from the very time of the making of the Masonic legends and traditions, they were accepted as a part of the annals of the association and were put into it as a portion of its true history. As such they have been maintained almost to the present day. Thus we have two histories of Freemasonry which have always been presenting themselves to our notice with the assumption of an equal claim to our belief.

We have, in the first place, the authentic history, gathered from the records of all the building guilds and fraternities from Bible times, and which, assuming various forms at different periods, has ripened into the Speculative Freemasonry of the present day.

Then we have a mass of legends and traditions made in the Middle Ages, with some others of a later day. These have been wedged into the authentic history, have grown up alongside of it, and have presented and sought to preserve a different and, of course, an apocryphal or doubtful form of history.

Looking at the time and manner of the making of these legends, and the persistent way in which for some centuries they have traveled down the stream of time along with the authentic history, it would perhaps have been better to designate them as "extra-historic," rather than "pre-historic" — something not before history, but something outside of history.

Yet, as they have been made to assume the appearance of prehistoric legends, and have claimed, however incorrectly, to be traditions of the origin and progress of the institution at a time when there were no written records of its existence, we feel ourselves excusable, and perhaps even justifiable, in tolerating temporarily this view, under the protest of this explanation, and of adopting the practice of historians in their studies of nations.

There is, unquestionably, a prehistoric architecture. The art of building, so as to secure shelter from the effects of the seasons and protection from the attacks of wild beasts, was practiced at a period long before the existence of any written records of the existence of the arts. The cavemen must have made alterations for their greater comfort, convenience, and security in the rude holes which they made their homes, and the lake-dwellers of prehistoric Switzerland exhibited, as we may judge from their remains, much skill and ingenuity in the construction of their lakeside houses.

But architecture, when it is not united with and practiced by an organized craft, gild, or fraternity, is not Freemasonry.

Therefore prehistoric architecture and prehistoric Freemasonry are two entirely different things. Of the former we have monumental records; of the latter we have not the same sort of evidence, and the term is used only as a form of speech, as a matter of convenience, and as a concession to custom in the treatment of historical subjects.

There is one very marked difference in character between the prehistoric myths of antiquity and the legends of Freemasonry, which, for the reason just assigned, we have placed in the supposed prehistoric period of that institution.

The myths of the earliest peoples found their origin and groundwork in their forced watch of the clashing powers of nature. The unsettled races, wandering over the wide plains and lofty mountains of the East, were necessarily struck by the alternate changes of darkness and light, of night and day. They saw and they feared the dark sky with its jewels of glittering stars and its shifting clouds; these they beheld dispersed by the rosy dawn, before which stars and clouds and darkness fled as the wild game flees before the hunter. Then they beheld the glorious sun, ushered in by the dawn, sweep across the sky, at length to be destroyed in the far West by the reviving forces of night, which again reigned supreme over the earth, until it was once more overcome by the ever-renewing dawn.

This constantly recurring elemental strife gave rise to the formation of myths, which made up fables out of the wars of these opposing forces of nature, just as, later, men in the historic period described the battles of conflicting armies. These simple

myths were undoubtedly the first acts of the human mind.¹ As time passed onward and the intellect became more cultivated, the myths developed into a definite form of religious faith. The forces of nature were likened to persons, as actual, living deities.

The Aryans, ancient people of Central Asia, the parent stock of the Hindus, Persians, Greeks, Latins, Celts, Anglo-Saxons, etc., out of the fire which descended from the clouds in the forked lightning, and the fire which they brought by friction out of the wood, both of which they deemed to be the same, made their god Agni.²

At a later period their Greek descendants symbolized the all-healing and purifying sun, whose rays render harmless the evil influences of malaria, as Herakles, the Grecian Samson, destroying the hydra, the many-headed water-serpent of the Lerna marshes, or as the light-diffusing Phœbus Apollo, who pictured the solar rays by his flowing locks of golden hair and his quiver filled with arrows.

Thus it was that the simple nature-myths of the primeval and founder nations, Aryan and Semitic, were in the progress of time resolved into a system of tangled mythology that became the popular religion of the ancient nations. But this mythology was separated from political and national history. The prehistoric mythology of Greece and Rome was always distinct from Grecian and Roman authentic history.

Though in the earliest period when history began to work its way out of tradition there was, undoubtedly, some confused mixture of the two, yet, as each nation began to keep its records, the two streams were made to flow in separate channels, and the mythical and the historical elements were not permitted to mingle. The priests preserved the former in their temple services, and the poets only referred to them in their epics and in their odes; the philosophers and the historians confined their instructions to the latter.

Not so has it been with the legends, which may be called the myths, of Freemasonry. Springing into existence not at any

¹ Goldziher says that the myth is the result of a purely psychological operation, and is, together with language, the oldest act of the human mind. "Mythology Among the Hebrews," ch. i, p. 3.

² In the old Vedic faith, Agni is sometimes addressed as the one great god who makes all things, sometimes as the light which fills the heavens, sometimes as the blazing lightning, or as the clear flame of earthly fire. "Con. Aryan Mythology," vol. ii, p. 190.

early, prehistorical period, but receiving their form at the very time when Freemasonry was already a historical institution, these traditions have traveled down at the same time with its authentic accounts, not in two independent and separated streams, but in one commingled current.

At the period when the Speculative element of Freemasonry withdrew itself from the alliance which it had always maintained, the traditions contained in the *Legend of the Craft*, forming the great body of Masonic myths, were put into and made an inseparable part of the true history. Nothing was rejected; everything was accepted as authentic. Indeed, other legends borrowed from or suggested by Rabbinical and Talmudical reveries were added.

Hence has arisen that badly tangled and unhappy confusion of tradition and history, of false and true, of apocryphal and authentic, that we find in all the so-called histories of Freemasonry written in the 18th century. Nor did this false method of writing cease with the passing of that period. It was continued into the 19th century, and its influence is still felt, not only in the opinions entertained by masses of the Fraternity, but in the statements made in addresses before lodges, by brethren not always unlearned or unscholarly, but who do not hesitate to advance traditions and legends as a substitute for the true history of the Order.

Just consider this mode of writing Masonic history. Let us take at random a single passage from one of the works of the most eminent among the writers of this school.

"The Druidical Memoranda," says Dr. Oliver,¹ "were made in the Greek character, for the Druids had been taught Masonry by Pythagoras himself, who had communicated its *arcana* to them, under the name he had assigned to it in his own country. This distinguished appellation (Mesouraneo), in the subsequent declension and oblivion of the science, during the dark ages of barbarity and superstition, might be corrupted into MASONRY, as its remains, being merely operative, were confined to a few hands, and these artificers and working Masons."

Here are no less than five positive assertions, of which but one rests on the slightest claim of authority, while the whole of them are absolutely unhistorical.

¹ "Antiquities of Freemasonry," Period I, ch. i, p. 17.

1. The statement that the Druids used the Greek character in their secret writing is made on the authority of a casual or offhand remark of Cæsar; but later authorities, much better than Cæsar on the subject of Druidism, have shown that the character used by them was the old Irish Oghum alphabet.

2. The assertion that the Druids practiced or were acquainted with Freemasonry is altogether doubtful and unsound. It is known that the dogmas and practices of their religion were opposed to those of Freemasonry.

3. The statement that they were taught Freemasonry by Pythagoras is offset by the simple fact that that philosopher, so far as we know, never visited Britain.

4. All that is said about the Greek word *Mesouraneō*, as the word under which Freemasonry was known to Pythagoras and given by him to the Druids, is seemingly a mere fable. It had its origin in a curious whim about the source of the word first proposed by Hutchinson, and which has never been accepted by competent experts in language growth.

5. The implied doctrine contained in the close of the paragraph, that the first form of Freemasonry was Speculative, and that the Operative branch was merely what remained after the decline and decay of the science, to be practiced by working Freemasons, is in direct violation of all historic truth, which makes the Speculative element an after-thought and a development out of the Operative.

When history is thus twisted and caricatured, what chance is there that the unlearned shall find the truth? What labor must then be imposed on the learned in their striving to extract the pure gold of facts from the worthless ore of tradition in which it has been imbedded?

The mode of writing Masonic history which was adopted in the 18th century, and which, with honorable exceptions, has been pursued almost to the present day, was one by no means calculated to get at truth or to satisfy the inquiring mind.

A groundwork for the history of Freemasonry was found in the *Legend of the Craft*. All the statements in that old document were accepted as authentic accounts, reports of events that had actually occurred. Hence the origin of the institution was placed at a period before the Flood. All the Patriarchs were de-

clared to have been Freemasons. Noah and his sons were said to have been the means of passing on its tenets from those living before the Flood to those who followed that deluge. Freemasonry's progress was traced from Noah to Moses, who was said to have practiced its mystic rites in the wilderness. From Moses it was made to pass over to Solomon, who, in some mysterious way, was supposed to have organized, as its first Grand Master, an association which, however, according to the preceding history, appears to have been in existence thousands of years before. From the King of Israel it was made to travel from Palestine to Europe, and is landed with little respect, or at least, with no accounting for the lapse of time, in the kingdom of France, and in the time of Charles Martel. From him it crosses the Channel, and is reorganized in England during the reign of King Athelstan and by his brother Edwin.

Such is the history of Freemasonry that for two centuries claimed and received almost universal belief from the Craft. Perhaps there never was a history of any kind that could present so few claims to complete confidence.

It is fragmentary in details. Centuries are passed over without connecting links. From Abraham, who, it is said, "had learned well the science and the art" (that is, Geometry and Operative Freemasonry), to Moses, who is called the Grand Master of the Jewish Freemasons, a period of more than four centuries passes with the most inefficient and unsatisfactory account, if it can be credited as a report at all, of how this science and art went from the one to the other. From Moses to Solomon there occurs a great gap of fifteen centuries, with scarcely an attempt to fill it up with an orderly series of successive and connected events. So the fragmentary history goes on in unsteady leaps from Solomon to Zerubbabel, from Zerubbabel to Augustus, from Augustus to Charles Martel, and finally from him to Athelstan.

It is contradictory in statements. Claiming for the institution a purely Hebrew character, it mixes with strange errors the labors and the favor of Jewish patriarchs and Pagan kings, and finds as much of true Freemasonry in the works of the idol-worshipping Nebuchadnezzar as in those of King Solomon.

Perhaps the most important fault of these 18th century historians of Freemasonry is the entire absence of all citation of

authority for the records which they have made. They assume a statement to suit their theory, but give no evidence or support from profane or sacred writers of the time when the event or events occurred that it is founded upon genuine fact and not a bare assumption or raw guess. The scholar seeking in his historical studies for truth and truth only, finds himself thus involved in a labyrinth or maze of doubts, from which all the canons, tests and standards of criticism, however skillfully applied, fail to free him. He knows not when the writer he follows is acting on the results of his own or some predecessor's invention, or when he is reciting a report of events that have really occurred.

We will not and should not credit to those writers who have thus made a romance instead of a history any willful intention to falsify the facts of history. Led astray at first by a misunderstanding of the *Legend of the Craft*, they on this mistake have framed a theory of the antiquity of Freemasonry going in the wrong direction. Then, as has occurred thousands of times before, they proceeded to fit the facts to the theory, and not, as they should have done, the theory to the facts. The doctrines of the new school of anthropology, which does not admit that the origin of the whole human family is to be found solely in the Semitic race in Palestine, were, in their day, unknown. Freemasonry was to those writers of that day older than the era of the revival and the establishment of the Grand Lodge of England, its antiquity was therefore sought only in the line of the Jewish patriarchs. Thus it became venerable, not only by age but by religious character. To this direction and end they wished to confine its rise and progress, and they thought that they could find the proofs in their own use of the *Legend of the Craft*, and the application to it of certain passages of Holy Writ. They succeeded in this, at least to their own satisfaction, because "The wish was father to the thought."

They recognized the symbolic character of Freemasonry. Some of the most important and expressive of these symbols existed in the Pagan associations of antiquity. They thought it necessary to account for this common use of the same ideas in two entirely different systems of religion and to explain them in such a way as not to impair the validity of the claim of Freemasonry to a purely Semitic origin.

This they did by supposing that while the Divine truths taught by Speculative Freemasonry were preserved in their purity by those of the descendants of Noah who had retained the instructions they had received from their great ancestor, there was at some era, generally placed at the time of the attempted building of the Tower of Babel, a secession or separation of a large number of the human race from the purer stock.

These seceders rapidly lost sight of the Divine truths which they had received at one time, and fell into the most hurtful religious errors. Thus they defiled the purity of the worship and the orthodoxy of the faith, the principles of which had been originally given to them.

There sprung up in this way two streams of Freemasonry, called by Dr. Oliver the "Pure" and the "Spurious." The former was practiced by the descendants of Noah in the Jewish line; the latter by his descendants in the Pagan line. Thus these theorists account for the presence of a Masonic element, though a misused one, in the mysteries of the ancient Pagan nations.

There was afterwards a union of these two lines, the Pure and the Spurious, at the building of the Temple of Jerusalem, when King Solomon welcomed the co-operation of the heathen workmen of the King of Tyre.

However, the Spurious Freemasonry did not cease to exist because of this union at the Temple of the Jewish and Tyrian Freemasons. Indeed, that lasted for many centuries later than this period. But the Jewish and Tyrian co-operation effected a mutual use of their respective doctrines and ceremonies. This brought about an end in due time of the two distinctive systems and the founding of a new one, the immediate forerunner of the present institution.

Such a delightful romance, where the imagination has been permitted to run riot, assumptions are boldly advanced as facts, and statements are made which there is no attempt to support by reference to authority, has all the charm of adventure. For long years these essays of invention have been accepted by thousands upon thousands of the Fraternity, and are still accepted by the masses as a true history of the rise and progress of Freemasonry.

Brother Mackey explains in most pertinent style how his views changed on this subject:

"In my younger days, when my researches were directed rather to the design and to the symbolism of the Order than to its history, which I was willing to take from older and more experienced heads, I had been attracted by the beauty and ingenuity of this romantic tale, and gave, without hesitation, my adhesion to it. But when my studies took a historical direction, and I began to apply the canons of criticism to what I was reading on this subject, I soon found and recognized that the landscape which I had viewed with so much pleasure was, after all, only a wonderful *mirage*.

"I have, therefore, been compelled to abandon this theory and to seek for one more plausible and more consistent with the facts of history. I have come to this conclusion with great reluctance, because I was unwilling to throw aside the picture I had so long admired and which was the work of masters whose labors I respected and whose memory I venerated. But I am forced to say, with Aristotle, that though Plato and Socrates be my friends, yet truth is a greater friend and one that I must value above them both." ¹

When we look at the course pursued by these Masonic historians of the early part of the 18th century, it is sad to think how many glorious opportunities of preserving facts in the history of the institution have been lost by the mistaken direction of their views. We have in the *History of St. Mary's Lodge*, by Bro. J. Murray Lyon, a fair sample of what might have been done by Dr. Anderson, if he had pursued a similar plan with the two editions of the *Constitutions* compiled by him.

Anderson must have had access in 1723 to many documents of great importance bearing on the history of Freemasonry in the latter part of the 17th and in the beginning of the 18th century. There were undoubtedly minutes of Lodges within his reach, but the Lodges are now extinct and the records perhaps forever lost. In these, he would have found authentic evidence of the manners and customs, the organization and the regulations, of the Operative Freemasons, and could have accurately defined the line by

¹ "Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed magis amica veritas," usually taken from the Greek of Ammonius, "Life of Aristotle," but has been credited by Roger Bacon to Plato himself.

which Operative Freemasonry passed on the way to a purely Speculative system.

On these subjects he has maintained silence. In the first edition he has not said a word of the actual condition of Freemasonry at the time of his writing. But he has wasted pages in an inaccurate story of the rise and progress of architecture, which had been already written by far better authority, because a professional architect with equal ability as an author can write history of his own science more skillfully than a doctor of divinity.

Even of the four Lodges which in 1717 organized the Grand Lodge of England, a few lines comprise the brief account that he gives. He tells us their names and the locality where they held their meetings, and no more. Yet these Lodges must have had their history, there must have been minute-books of some kind, however imperfect might have been the records. And these minute-books, only three or four, must have been in existence before Anderson began the compilation of his book, and from his position in the Order must have been within his reach. Nevertheless, he has treated these records — invaluable to the future Masonic historian and which should have been invaluable to him — with a silence akin to contempt.

Comparing this treatment of the early English records with the manner in which Lyon has used those of Scotland, we can not too much deplore this neglect of the real duties of a historian. The result of this difference in handling the same subject by two historians has been that while we are made by Lyon familiar with the true history of the Scottish Lodges in the 17th century — with their regulations, their usages, their modes of reception, and almost everything that belongs to their internal organization — we are, so far as we can gather anything from Anderson, absolutely as ignorant of all that relates to the English Lodges of the same period as if no such bodies had ever existed.

Such neglect of opportunities never to be recalled, such utter silence on topics of the deepest interest, and such waste of time and talent in making a lifeless story of architecture instead of an authentic narrative of the Masonic history passing before his eyes, or with which he must have been familiar from existing documents, and from conversing with many of the actors in

that history, is to be not only deeply regretted, but to be regarded almost as a crime.

Anderson's compilation gave form and feature to all later histories of Freemasonry until a recent period. Smith, Calcott, Preston, and Oliver followed in his footsteps, only pouring, as it were, from one vial into another, so that all the use of early Freemasonry before the year 1717, as treated by English and French writers, has been almost wholly without the necessary element of authenticity. These historians dealt in suggestions, assumptions, guesses, fancies and romantic legends, so as to lead the student of their pages, in search of historical light, into a tangled web of doubt and confusion.

The Germans have done better. Bringing the Teutonic instinct of laborious research to the investigation of Masonic history, they have done much toward the discovery of truth. English Freemasons, forming a school of iconoclasts or image-breakers, begun, by rejecting improbabilities, to give to that history a shape that will stand critical tests.

It must be evident to the reader, from what has been said, that the history of Freemasonry, upon which this book is about to enter, will be treated in a method that seeks to approach that accuracy with which authentic history should always be written. From the causes already assigned, there must often be an embarrassment in finding proper evidence to authenticate the material offered to the inspection of the reader. But in no case will fiction be presented in the place of facts. When the occurrence can not be proved by authority, such events will not be recorded as historical. It may be thought that such events have occurred, and such a conjecture be entirely legitimate, but its value will be determined by its plausibility. It will be a matter of logical inference, and not of historical statement. Thus one of the great errors of Anderson will be avoided. He continually presents his conjectures as facts, without warning, and thus leaves his reader in doubt as to when he is writing history and when indulging in romance or in assumptions.

Pursuing this method, we reject the theory that Freemasonry received its organization at the Temple of Solomon. There is no historical evidence of the truth of the claim. The only authorities on this subject are the Books of *Kings* and *Chron-*

icles. That of Josephus need not be referred to, because it is simply a compilation of Jewish history made up out of the Scriptural account. The account of the events that occurred at the building of the Temple is very briefly related in those books, and give us no authority for saying that there was any organization of the builders at all like the one described in our Masonic histories.

Similar objections may be urged against all other theories seeking to connect the rise of the Masonic institution from bodies which were not architectural in their character. We fall back, therefore, upon that theory which since the time of the Abbé Grandidier has been gradually gaining strength, and which connects the Speculative Freemasonry of our own times with the Operative Freemasonry of the Middle Ages.

Never abandoning, for a moment, the guiding idea that Freemasonry, in whatever aspect it may be viewed, whether as Operative or Speculative, ancient or modern, has always been connected in some way with the art of building and with a gild organization, we shall proceed to trace its early history not in religious communities or in social fraternities, but solely in the associations organized for the pursuit and practice of architecture.

Finding such associations among the ancient Romans, we shall endeavor to pursue the course of these associations, from their birth in the imperial city and in the time and under the fostering care of Numa, to their spreading abroad with the Roman legions into the conquered countries of Gaul, Germany, and Britain; their later founding in these lands of fraternities they called Colleges of Workmen (*Collegia Fabrorum*), out of which, after the decay of the Empire and the wiping out of the armies, developed in the gradual course of civilization the societies of Traveling Freemasons who sprang from the school of Como in Lombardy.

Thence, by slow but sure steps, we advance to the time of the Operatives or Stonemasons of Germany, France, and Britain, a development of the Comacine Fraternity.

This will bring us to the era when the Operative system was wholly given up as a practice, and when the society was delivered to the pursuit of a Speculative Philosophy, still, however, retaining the evidence within itself of its architectural parent-

age, by the selection of its symbols and its peculiar language as well as by many features of its organization.

The linking, according to this theory, of Freemasonry with the art of building, a connection that has never, even in its Speculative form, been wholly severed, will necessarily lead to discussions in the course of this history upon the allied topics of Roman, Byzantine, and Gothic architecture.

These subjects will be discussed, not as mere architectural studies, but solely in their close relationship to Freemasonry, and in respect to the interplay influences that were exerted upon Freemasonry and its followers by the varying systems of architecture and that produced on them by the skill and intelligence of the Freemasons.

There will be no attempt to write a history of Architecture and to call it, as Dr. Anderson has unfortunately done, a history of Freemasonry. A sincere and an energetic effort will be made to write a history of Freemasonry in its connection and reference to Architecture.

"Every Freemason," said the Chevalier Ramsay, in his less historical than inspiring hypothesis, "is a Templar." Perhaps the truer doctrine is that in the olden time every Freemason was an architect, using this word in its best meaning to signify a builder.

Henry Hallam says, in his *History of the Middle Ages*, that "The curious subject of Freemasonry has unfortunately been treated of only by panegyrists or calumniators, both equally mendacious." He thinks that it would be interesting to know more of the history of the Craft during a period in which they were actually the architects of buildings. The desire here expressed, it is the object and the design of this work to gratify. Whether the object has been successfully achieved can be determined only when the work is finished.

Let us say, in bringing this introductory essay to a close — and we say it lest there should be any mistake as to our views — that the theory which we shall seek to establish is not that the Freemasons of the present day are in direct and uninterrupted descent from the Roman Colleges of Artificers, other than that these latter associations brought, by the Roman legions from the civilization of the Empire, into the comparatively rude prov-

inces of Gaul, Germany, and Britain, those sentiments of architectural beauty, as well as those principles of architectural skill, which gave rise to the establishment of associations of builders, who in time formed themselves into gilds.

These gilds, or fraternities, at a very early period assumed an important place in the history and practice of the building art, and associated themselves together for the purpose of teaching and spreading the principles and practice of building over certain parts of Europe.

Thence arose the association known as "Traveling Freemasons," who, starting from their school in Lombardy, traveled over the continent and erected many important edifices, mostly of a religious type, such as monasteries and cathedrals.

From these, the Stonemasons of Germany, of France, and of England borrowed the system of gild-formation, that is to say, the customs and regulations of a gild in the practice of their profession.

These Operative Freemasons at various times admitted into the membership and privileges of their gild many persons of rank, influence, and learning, who were not professionally connected with the building art or trade. These honorary admissions gained two objects: they were received as gratifying compliments by the non-professional members, and at the same time secured their good wishes and protection for the gild.

But in the course of time a separation took place between the Operative Freemasons and the honorary members. The former adhered to the Operative Craft, but the latter, eliminating altogether the Operative element, formed a new gild or fraternity of Speculative Freemasons whose only connection with architecture or building was that they preserved much of its technical words and tools, but consecrated them to symbolical purposes.

Having thus abandoned the professional practice of the craft of building, and assumed a purely philosophical character, they became the Freemasons, or the Speculative Craftsmen, of the present day.

Such is a brief, and, of course, a rough outline of the plan which will be pursued in the future prosecution of this history of the rise and progress of the Order of Freemasonry.

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

THE ROMAN COLLEGES OF ARTIFICERS



It will be evident, from what has already been said, that the plan upon which it is intended to write the history of Freemasonry for the present work will shut out entirely any search for the origin of the institution among the purely religious associations of antiquity, whether they be of Jewish or of Gentile character. For reasons given, we can reject as unsound the hypotheses tracing the foundation and the rise of the Order to the Patriarchal religion, the ancient Mysteries, the workmen at the Temple of Solomon, the Druids, the Essenes, or the Pythagoreans.

If we view the Speculative Freemasonry of the present day as the outgrowth of the Operative system prevailing in the Middle Ages, we must look for the remote origin of the former in the same place where we shall find that of the latter.

Now, the mediæval Operative Craftsmen Workers in Stone, known as the *Steinmetzen* of Germany, the *Tailleurs de Pierre* of France, and the *Freemasons* of England, were assembled and worked together under the form and regulations of a *Gild*.¹ But as all institutions in their gradual growth are apt to preserve some of the most important features of their original construction, notwithstanding all the changes and influences of surrounding circumstances to which they are subject in the course of time, we may very fairly come to the conclusion that whatever was the original body from which the Freemasonry of the Middle Ages derived its existence, or of which it was a continuation, that prototype must have had some of the forms of a *Gild*.

¹ An association of persons engaged in the same business and organized for mutual protection. They obtained the approval by charter from Governments, swore in their officers before public officials, established rules as to hours of labor, quality of work, allowable competition, and had their respective patron saints and chapels.

It is true that when the Operative Freemasons organized themselves into an association, at some time between the 10th and the 17th centuries, which period is not at this time and in this place to be accurately determined, they may as an original body have assumed a form, independent of all previous influences. But we know that such is not the fact. The Freemasons of that period were the successors of other bodies, and that they only developed and improved the principles of art that had already been long in existence.

Then the first body of men — the association, the sodality — of which they were the outgrowth must have some features in its form and character that were imitated by the body of Freemasons who succeeded them, who pursued the same objects, and only developed and improved the same principles.

Now, what were the features that must distinguish and identify the original, the exemplar, mold or pattern, of which the more modern Freemasonry was an outgrowth?

We are led to answer to this question that those features, to which we must look for an identification of the original body, are at least two in number:

First, the original body must have had the form and character of a sodality, a fraternity, or what in more modern times would be called a *Gild*.

Secondly, that this sodality, fraternity, or gild must have comprised members who were engaged in the practice of the art of building.

The absence of either of these two features will make a fatal break in the process of identification, by which alone we are enabled to trace a connection between the original and the copy.

We can easily find in the records of ancient history numerous instances of sodalities or confraternities, but as they had no reference to the art of building, it is clear that not one of them could have been the exemplar or source of mediæval Freemasonry.

The members of those religious associations of antiquity, which were called the "Mysteries," and to which Speculative Freemasonry is thought, not altogether incorrectly, to bear a great likeness, were undoubtedly united in a sodality or fraternity.

They had admitted into their association none but those who had been duly chosen, and reserved to themselves the power of rejecting those whom they did not deem worthy of a part in their rites; they had ceremonies of initiation; they adopted secret methods of recognition; and in many other ways secured the solitary position of an exclusive society. They were in every respect a fraternity, and their organization bore a very striking resemblance to that of the modern Freemasons. Hence it is that some writers have professed to find in these religious Mysteries of the ancient Pagans an origin to which they might properly trace the Masonic institution. But the theory is plainly unsound, because these religious associations had no connection with architecture or the art of building. Freemasonry, which always has been either an operative art or been closely connected with it, could not, by any possible contingency, have taken its start from what was a wholly religious association.

The Society of Dionysiac Artificers, who flourished in Asia Minor, did indeed unite with the observance of the Mysteries of Dionysus the practice of architecture. Therefore, the compiler of Lawrie's *History of Masonry* undertook to trace the origin of our modern system to the connection of the Pagan Dionysiaks with the Jewish Builders at the construction of King Solomon's Temple. There would be a great deal of force in this theory, if it could be proved that the Dionysiaks as architects were of the same period with Hiram of Tyre and Solomon of Israel. But unfortunately the authentic records of the order of events prove that they were only known as builders of temples, palaces, and theaters, about seven hundred years after the era of the building of the Temple at Jerusalem.

So, too, of the Essenes, we may say that the doctrine can not be sustained which credits to them the continuation and preservation of the Freemasonry of the Temple builders, and which assigns to them the origin of the modern Speculative system. Leaving out of the question the fact that it is impossible to account for the lapse of time which occurred between the construction of the Temple and the first appearance of the Essenes, about the era of the Maccabees, we meet with the very serious objection that the Essenian sect was wholly unconnected with architecture.

Thus, too, of all the other schemes of tracing Freemasonry to the Druids, the Pythagoreans, or the Rosicrucians, we always have the obstacle in our way, that all of these were associations not devoted to nor pursuing the art of building. We can not but agree that it is impossible to trace the origin of a fraternity of working Freemasons, all of whose ideas, principles, pursuits, usages, and customs plainly and exclusively connected them with the cultivation of architecture and the art of building, not theoretically but practically, to any other and older sodality which knew nothing of architecture and whose members never were engaged in the erection of buildings.

But if we should discover in long-past time a sodality whose members were builders and who were bound together for the purpose of pursuing their professional labors, in a society which partook of the main features of a modern gild, we should be encouraged to make the inquiry whether such a sodality may not have given birth, and suggested form, to the mediæval associations of Operative Freemasons, from whom afterward sprang, in direct succession, the Speculative Freemasons of the 18th century.

Just such a sodality will be found in the Roman Colleges of Artificers — the *Collegia Fabrorum* — which are said to have been instituted by Numa, the successor of Romulus, and, therefore, the second king of Rome.

That the establishment of these colleges of workmen of various crafts was one of the numerous reforms instituted by Numa, among his subjects, is a fact that has not been denied by historians. Evidence of the existence of these colleges in the later days of the empire and of their spreading from Rome into various provinces, is attested by many inscriptions in votive tablets — memorials erected to fulfill some vow — and other monuments that remain to the present day.

The important relation which it is supposed that the Roman colleges bore to mediæval stonemasonry, makes it proper for us that something more than a mere glance should be given at the history of their origin and progress as well as at their character and design.

Of Numa himself, a few words may be said. He was undoubtedly one of those great reformers who, like Confucius, Moses,

Buddha, and Zoroaster, sprung up at various times in the world's history and changed the character and the religion of the people among whom they lived and placed them on the first steps of the march of civilization. That such was the career of Numa is testified by the fact that he so changed the military disorder of the loosely held together masses that had been left by Romulus, into the orderly arrangements of a well-regulated municipality, that as Livy says, that which the neighboring nations had hitherto called a camp, they now began to name with respect a city.

Numa, who was a native of Cures, a large city of the Sabines, was, on account of his nationality, selected, through the influence of the Sabine population of Rome, to succeed Romulus, and was called to the throne, according to the generally received record of events, 686 years before the Christian era.

Having borne in his private life the character of a wise and just man, with no distinction as a warrior, he favored, when he assumed the reins of government, all the virtues of peace. He found the Romans a gross and almost barbarous people. He refined their manners, purified their religion, built temples, started festivals, and established a regular order of priesthood.

As Plutarch says, the most admirable of all his institutions was his distribution of the citizens according to their various arts and trades. Before he came to the throne, the various craftsmen had been confusedly mixed up with the divisions of the Roman and Sabine population, and had no laws or regulations to maintain their rights or to secure their skill from the rivalry of inexperienced workers and tradesmen.

Numa divided the several trades into distinct and independent companies, which were known as *Collegia* or colleges. Plutarch names but eight of these colleges, namely: musicians, goldsmiths, masons, dyers, shoemakers, tanners, braziers, and potters; but he adds that the other artificers were also divided into companies. Thus we find that the exact number of colleges instituted by Numa can not be learned from the authority of Plutarch. If we suppose that the other artificers alluded to by him included all the remaining crafts, which were united in another college, which was afterward developed into new societies, the whole number, which according to Plutarch were originally instituted by Numa, would amount to nine.

Besides the *Collegia*, and we include of course such as those of the augurs¹ and priests which were specially established by legal authority, there were many others formed by the voluntary association of individuals. On this account the number of the colleges of handicraftsmen became in the later days of the republic, and especially of the empire, greatly increased.

There were, among the Greeks, sodalities or fraternities which they called *Etaireiai*. They were established by Solon, and Gaius thinks that the Roman colleges borrowed some of their rules from them. But this could not have been the case in reference to any regulations established by Numa, since Solon lived about a century after him. The Greek *Etaireiai* were, however, not confined to craftsmen. According to the law of Solon, cited by Gaius,² the *Etaireiai* were brethren assembled for sacrifices, or sailors, or people who lived together and used the same tomb for burial, or who were companions of the same society, or who, inhabiting the same place, were united in the pursuit of any business, which last division might be supposed to refer to workmen of the same craft. All of these were permitted to make regulations for their own government, provided they were not forbidden by the laws of the state.

Among the Romans a college generally signified any association which, being permitted by the state and recognized as an independent association, devoted itself to some determined object. Its recognition by the state gave to the college the character of a legal person, such as is now called a corporation.

If we examine the laws made for the establishment and the government of the colleges, we shall be impressed with their similarity to those which have always existed among the Masonic Lodges, both Operative and Speculative. The identity of regulations are amply sufficient to warrant us in believing that the regulations of the one were derived from, or at least had been suggested by, the other.

The laws and usages by which the workmen at the Temple of King Solomon were distributed into classes and regulated, which have been given by Masonic historians, and by none more exten-

¹An official religious class among the Romans whose duty it was to foretell future events by explaining omens and signs and to give advice on public affairs.

²Gaius, lib. iv, ad Legem duodecim tabularum.

sively than by Dr. Oliver, are all guesses and doubtful; but those that describe the government of the Roman colleges or guilds of craftsmen have been recorded by various historians, and especially in the different codes of the Roman law and have, therefore, all the character and value of authenticity. Whatever conclusions we may think proper to draw in connecting these colleges with the modern Masonic guilds, must of course be judged according to their logical weight, but the facts on which these conclusions are based are patent and have an authentic record.

It was required by the Roman law that a college should not consist of less than three members. It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that a Lodge can not be composed of less than three Freemasons. As in Freemasonry there are "regular Lodges" which have been established by competent authority, and "clandestine Lodges" which have been organized without such authority, and whose members are subject to the severest Masonic penalties, so there were legal colleges — *Collegia licita* — which were formed by authority of the government — and illegal colleges — *Collegia illicita* — which assembled under no color of law and which were strictly forbidden.

Illicit colleges, says Ulpian,¹ are forbidden, under the same penalties as are adjudged to men violating public places or temples; and Marcian² says that they must be dissolved by virtue of the decrees of the Senate, but their members when they separate are permitted to divide the common property.

According to the Justinian code, no college of any kind was permitted to assemble unless by an act of the Senate, or a decree of the Emperor.³

Each college was permitted to make its own internal regulations, provided that they were not contrary to the laws of the state. The regulations were proposed by the officers, and after due study adopted or rejected by a vote of the members, in which a majority ruled.

The members of a college (*sodales*), says Gaius,⁴ were permitted to make their own regulations if they did not oppose the

¹ Ulpian, "De Officiis Pro Consulibus," lib. ii, p. 7.

² "De Jud. Pub.," lib. ii.

³ "Digest," lib. xlvii, tit. xxii, § 1.

⁴ "Ad Legem," xii, tab. lib. iv.

public law; and he shows that the same privilege was granted by Solon to the Greek *Etaireiai* or fraternities.

The colleges had also the right of electing their officers, and of receiving members by a vote of the body on their application. The applicants for admission were required to be freemen; but the Justinian code permitted slaves to be received into a college if it was done with the consent of the *Domini* or Masters, but not otherwise, under a penalty of one hundred pieces of gold to be inflicted on the *Curatores* or Wardens.¹

As in the Lodges of Freemasons of the Middle Ages we find that noted persons not belonging to the Craft were sometimes admitted, so a similar custom prevailed in the Roman colleges. To them the law had granted the privilege of selecting from the most honorable of the Roman families, persons who were not connected with the Craft, as patrons and honorary members. That they exercised this privilege is evident from inscriptions and some remaining lists of members.²

We have also the authority on this point of Pliny, who in his letters, when he was governor of Bithynia, with the Emperor Trajan, shows indirectly that it was the usage of the colleges of builders to admit non-professional persons into their gild. A fire having destroyed a great part of the city of Nicomedia, Pliny applied to the Emperor for permission to found a College of Workmen — COLLEGIUM FABRORUM, to consist of one hundred and fifty men. Knowing that it was the custom in these colleges to admit persons who were not of the Craft, he adds: "I will take care that no one not a workman shall be received among them, and that they shall not abuse the privileges given to them by their establishment."³

Each college had also its arca, or common chest, in which the funds of the gild were kept. These funds were collected from the monthly contributions of the members, and were, of course, devoted to defraying the expenses of the college. At a later period when these societies, or sodalities, had become objects of suspicion to the government, because of their sometimes engag-

¹ "Digest," as above, § 2.

² Krause, "Kunsturkunden," iv, p. 136.

³ Ego attendam ne quis nisi faber, recipiatur, neve jure concessio in aliud utatur. Pliny, "Epistolæ," lib. x, ep. 42.

ing in political tricks, they were forbidden to assemble. But there is a decree of the Emperor Severus, cited by Marcianus, which, while it forbids the governors of provinces to permit COLLEGIA SODALITIA or fraternities, even of soldiers, in the camps, yet allows the poorer soldiers to make a monthly contribution in a common chest, provided they did not meet more than once a month, lest under this pretext they should form an unlawful college. The permission thus given to make monthly contributions (what in modern Freemasonry we should call "monthly dues") was most probably taken from the custom long before practiced by the Colleges of Workmen.

The members of the colleges were freed by Constantine from the performance of public duties; but this exemption appears to have applied to all craftsmen as well as to those who were united in corporations. The reason given was that they might have better opportunities of acquiring skill in their professions or trades and of teaching it to their children. Therefore this freedom from public employments was reserved in the colleges to those members who were really craftsmen. The code of Theodosius¹ plainly said that this freedom should not be granted freely to all who had been received in the colleges, but only to the craftsmen. Patrons and honorary members were not to be included in the exemption.

The meetings of a college were held in a private, probably tiled, hall called a *Curia*, which was the name originally given to the Senate-house, but afterward came to signify any building in which societies met for the transaction of business or for the performance of religious rites. Each of these corporations, says Smith, had its common hall, called *Curia*, in which the citizens met for religious and other purposes.² In the old inscriptions we frequently meet with this word in connection with a college, as the *Curia Saliorum*, or the Hall of the College of the Priests of Mars, and *Curia Dendrophororum*, or the Hall of the College of Woodcutters.³ Krause says that they sometimes met in private houses. He does not give his authority for this statement, but

¹ "Cod. Theodos. de excus. Artificum," lib. v., § 12.

² "Dict. Greek and Roman Antiq.," citing Dionysius of Halicarnassus, ii, 23.

³ This was one of the original colleges of Numa. There is some dispute about their occupation; but the one given above is the most likely.

it was probably in cases where the college was too poor to afford the expense of owning or hiring a common hall or *Curia*.

Officers were elected by the members to preside or to perform other duties in the college. There seems to have been some variety, at different periods and under different circumstances, in the titles of these officers.

The officer who presided was called the *Magister* or Master. It would seem that in some of the legionary colleges he was called the *Profectus* or Prefect. In the Justinian code he is styled the *Curator*.¹

Corresponding in some sense to our Masonic Wardens were the *Decuriones*, whose number was not, however, confined to two. In a list of the officers and members of a college, which has been preserved and which is given by Muratori, there are seven *Decuriones*.

A *Decurio* denoted, as the word meant among the Romans, one who commanded or ruled over ten men. Hence Dr. Krause supposes that the members of a college were divided into sections of about ten, over each of which a *Decurio* presided. It will be remembered that Sir Christopher Wren is quoted in the *Parentalia*, while describing the regulations that prevailed among the Traveling Freemasons of the Middle Ages, that "The members lived in a camp of huts reared beside the building on which they were employed; that a surveyor or Master presided over and directed the whole; and that *every tenth man* was called a Warden and overlooked those who were under his charge." This is at least a curious coincidence. It may give some color if not decided strength to the theory of Krause, that the *Decuriones* of the Roman colleges presided over sections or groups of ten men each.

Reference has been made to a list of the officers of a college, which has been preserved by the Italian antiquary, Muratori.² Similar lists are found in the works of Gruter, who has made the best collection of ancient inscriptions.

These lists, like those published at this day by the Masonic Lodges, were intended to preserve the names of the officers and members for the information of the government.

¹ "Digest," lib. xlvii, tit. xxii, § 2.

² Lodovico Antonia Muratori, born 1672, died 1750, wrote the "Rerum Italicarum Scriptores," dealing with the sources of history in the Middle Ages, and other research studies.

The list published by Muratori shows the following names and titles of officers, which will give us a very good idea of the manner in which the internal government of a Roman College of Artificers was regulated. In this list first appears the names of fifteen Patrons, who, as has already been said, were not craftsmen. The last of these is called the *Bisellarius of the college*.

There is some difficulty in coming to an exact understanding of the meaning of this word. A *bisellium* was a double seat — a seat capable of holding two — as Hesychius calls it, “a distinguished and splendid seat,” remarkable for its size and quality. It might be compared to the “Oriental chair” given up to the use of the Worshipful Master in our modern Lodges. It was, in short, a chair of state, capable of holding two persons; though it is evident, from several specimens which were found at Pompeii and which were accompanied by a single footstool, that it was occupied only by one. These chairs were used in the theaters and other public places at Rome and in the provinces as seats of honor. The privilege of occupying a *bisellium* was granted as an honor by a decree of the Senate or an edict of the Emperor, and the person to whom the privilege was granted was called a *Bisellarius*. The form of the seat was like that of a modern ottoman, but larger and higher, and there was also a stool or *suppedaneum*, on which the feet rested.

Krause says that some of the colleges had several *Bisellarii* among their members, and he thinks the word means the same thing as honorary member. But as the Patrons were generally persons of wealth and distinction, selected by the college to defend and promote its interests, it is not likely that of the fifteen named in Muratori's list only one should have been elected an honorary member. But as the privilege of a *Bisellarius* was a dignity conferred as an honor on certain persons, it is more probable that of the fifteen the last one only had arrived at this honor, and that the record of it was made in the list, just as in the present day titles are added to the names of persons in catalogues.

The next officers mentioned in this list are seven *Decuriones*. Then follow the names of the following officers: An *Haruspex*, a Soothsayer and Diviner, who may be considered as about the same as our modern chaplain, and whose duty it was to attend to the sacrifices and conduct the religious services of the college;

a *Medicus*, or Physician; a *Scriba Perpetuus*, or Permanent Secretary; and a *Scriba*, or Secretary. Against the names of two of the members is written the word *immunes*, or free from obligation, to show that for some reason, not explained, these members were relieved from the payment of the monthly dues.

No title of *Magister* or Master appears in this list. The same occurs in an inscription on a marble plinth, or column base, which has been preserved by Gruter.¹ It is dedicated on the front side by the College of Carpenters (*Collegium Fabrorum Tignariorum*) to the Emperor M. Aurelius Antoninus. On the other side are forty names, many of which have the title of *Honoratus*, or Honorary, affixed. The last six names have the title of *Scriba*, or Secretary, attached to each; hence Krause thinks it probable that each *Decuria*, or section of ten men, had its Master, who was a *Decurio*, its Secretary, and its Patron, and, besides its own property, obtained from bequests or gifts.

If this be true, a college would not appear to have been a single Lodge, but rather a Group of Lodges. The division, in the Middle Ages, described by Wren, where in a building the workmen were divided into tens each having its own warden, would precisely meet this ancient condition of the *Decuriæ*.

In the time of the Empire, when the government began to suspect the radical tendencies of the craftsmen, care was taken to place officers over the colleges who might have a control of their arts. These officers were not the same at all times in these several places. Sometimes he was called a *Procurator*, or Superintendent; sometimes a *Præpositus*, or Overseer, and sometimes a *Præfectus*, or Prefect. In fact, the legionary colleges, which went along with the legions and which were principally concerned in the making of weapons, as armorers and smiths, had an officer over them who was called the *Præfectus Fabrorum*, or Prefect of the Workmen.

But originally the title of *Magister*, or Master, was applied to him who was over the *Decuriones*, and who controlled all the acts, the labors, and the hours of rest of the members of the college, as well as their sacrifices and other religious ceremonies. There is abundant evidence of this in the inscriptions. From

¹ John Gruter, born 1560 at Antwerp, died 1627. Edited several Latin classics as well as collections of Roman inscriptions, etc.

them also we learn that the Master was chosen annually, and afterwards with all the other officers every five years. Sometimes he was elected for life, a custom observed at a long and later period by the French Lodges, whose *Vénérables*, or Masters, were chosen *ad vitam*, for life periods.

Thus we meet with such inscriptions as *Magister quinquennatis Collegium Fabrorum Tignariorum* and *Magister quinquennatis Collegium Aurificum*, that is, Quinquennial Master of the College of Carpenters and Quinquennial Master of the College of Goldsmiths. Sertorius also refers to certain peculiar powers of the *Magister Collegium*, or Master of the College. There can be no doubt that this was a well-recognized title of the presiding officer of those sodalities.

The Patrons, selected from the most wealthy and powerful families of Rome, and who were not craftsmen, seemed to have exercised important influence. Chosen that they might protect the interests of the society, no regulation was enacted, no contracts were made, and no work undertaken without their consent. The kings, prelates, and nobles so often recorded as Grand Masters by Dr. Anderson in his history of early English Freemasonry, may very well be supposed to correspond in position and duties to these Patrons of the Roman Colleges.

Dr. Krause thus describes the internal organization of these colleges:

"It was only the Masters who could undertake any work. The members of the *Decuriæ* (or sections) who corresponded to the Fellow Crafts of the present day, worked under them. Under these and under the Masters, were the *Alumni* or Apprentices, who were still being instructed in the schools (attached to the college) and whose names, as they were not yet members of the college, are not mentioned in any of the Inscriptions."¹

That there was a distinction of rank among the members of a college is very evident from several of the inscriptions, and from passages in the codes. Besides, it is in the nature of things that in every trade or craft there should be some well skilled and experienced in the Mystery, who will take the highest place; others with less knowledge who must be subordinate to these; and finally scholars or apprentices who are only beginning to

¹ Krause, "Kunsturkunden," iv, 165.

learn the principles of their art. As in the Lodges of Operative Freemasons, in the Middle Ages, there were Masters, Journeymen, and Apprentices, so must there have been in the colleges of Rome a similar division of rank.

The passage in the Justinian code, already mentioned, provides that slaves could be received in the colleges only with the consent of their masters; if received without this consent the *Curator* or Master of the College was liable to a penalty of one hundred pieces of gold. This would show that in the Roman colleges, the distinction of bond and free, so much insisted on in the modern Masonic system, was not recognized quite in the same way among the craftsmen of Rome. But it must be remembered that among the Romans, a condition of slavery did not always mean the chains of ignorance. Slaves were sometimes instructed in literature and the liberal arts, and many of them were employed in trade and in various handicrafts. It was these last who were to be conditionally admitted into the Colleges of Artificers.

It is evident that with the practice of their craft, the members of the colleges connected the observance of certain religious rites. In the list from Muratori, heretofore cited, it is seen that among the officers designated was a *Haruspex* or Sacrificer. This semi-religious character, first introduced in their establishment by the pious Numa, continued to prevail to the latest days of the Empire. It was in the spirit of Paganism, which linked with the rites and ceremonies of sacrifice the transaction of all private as well as public business.

Hence, every college had its patron god, called its *Genius*, under whose divine protection it was placed. The *Curia*, or hall of the college, was as a rule built in the near vicinity of the temple of this god, and meetings of the gild were sometimes held in the body of the temple. Sacrifices were offered to him; festival days were kept in his honor, and were often celebrated by public parades. Among the paintings discovered at Pompeii is one that represents a procession of the College of Carpenters.

Krause gives ample proof that the Colleges of Artificers made use of symbols taken from the tools and the customs of their craft. We need not be surprised at this, for the symbolic idea was, as we know, largely favored by the ancients. Their

mythology, which was their religion, was made up out of a great system of symbolism. Sabianism, the revering of influences residing in the heavenly bodies, their first worship, was altogether symbolic, and out of their early adoration of the simple forces of nature, by degrees and with the advancement of civilization, was developed a series of gods, every one of which could be traced for his origin to the impersonation of a symbol. It would, indeed, be strange if, with such an education, the various craftsmen had failed to have impressed their trades with that same symbolic spirit which was put into all their religious rites and their public and private acts.

But it is interesting to trace the architectural symbolism of the mediæval builders to influences exerted upon them by the old builders of Rome, and which they in turn gave to their successors, the Speculative Freemasons of the 18th and perhaps the 17th century.

This is one of the most important links in the chain that connects the Roman colleges with modern Freemasonry. Nothing of the kind can be shown by those who would trace the latter institution to a Jewish or Patriarchal source. The Jews rejected as vainly superstitious the use of painting and sculpture in their worship. Though we find among them a few symbols of the simplest kind, symbolism was not treated by them as an intellectual science. Christian imagery in art, which succeeded the Jewish and the Pagan, has been more indebted for its very symbolic character to the latter than to the former influences. It is the same with the symbolism that has always been cultivated in Freemasonry, both in its Operative and in its Speculative form. It has been indebted for its warmth and beauty rather to the Roman colleges than to the Jewish Temple.

The most important of these colleges in the present inquiry were the *Collegia Fabrorum*, a phrase which has generally been translated the Colleges of Artificers.

The word *Faber*, in the Latin language, means generally one who works in any material, but the signification is limited by some adjoining word. Thus *faber tignarius* meant a carpenter, *faber ferrarius* a blacksmith, *faber aurarius* a goldsmith, and so on. But it was very generally used to designate one who was employed in building — a stone-cutter or mason.

We meet in Gruter, and elsewhere, with many inscriptions in which the word can only bear this meaning. In the passage above cited from Pliny, we see that when he asks the imperial consent to establish a society of artisans to reconstruct the burned edifices of Nicomedia, for which purpose builders only could be of use, he calls the desired society a *Collegium Fabrorum*, which may be fairly explained to be a College or Gild of Masons.

There were, of course, colleges of other trades, such as the *Collegium Pistorum*, or College of Bakers, the *Collegium Sutorum*, or College of Shoemakers, of whom a votive tablet was found at Osma in Castile,¹ and many others. But, as Dalloway says, the *Fabri* were "workmen employed in any kind of construction and subject to the laws of Numa Pompilius."²

To these *Collegia Fabrorum*, or Roman gilds of Freemasons or Builders, Dr. Krause, whose opinion on this subject we adopt with some slight changes, has sought to trace the origin of the corporations of stonemasons in the Middle Ages and the more recent Lodges of Freemasons.

Concluding this survey of the character and internal organization of these Roman colleges, the pioneer bodies of the modern Masonic gilds, it will be proper to cite the language on this subject of the latest and most classical writers on the antiquities of Greece and Rome. The following brief description is taken from Guhl and Komer's able work on *The Life of the Greeks and Romans*.³

"Mechanics' gilds (*Collegia Opipium*) existed at an early period, their origin being traced back to King Numa. They were nine in number, viz., pipers, carpenters, goldsmiths, dyers, leather-workers, tanners, smiths, and potters, and another gild combining, at first, all the remaining handicrafts, which afterward grew into new, separate societies. Amongst these later gilds, frequently mentioned in the inscriptions, we name the goldsmiths, bakers, purple-dyers, pig-dealers, sailors, ferry-men, physicians, etc. They had their separate inns or private halls (*curia, schola*), their laws and rules of reception and expulsion of mem-

¹ Don Cean-Bermudez, "Sumario de las Antiguedas Romanas que hay in España," Madrid, 1832, p. 179.

² "Master and Freemason," p. 400.

³ Hueffer's Translation from third German edition, New York, 1875, p. 519.

bers, their collective and individual benefits, their regulations for mutual protection and their widows' funds, not unlike the mediæval gilds. There was, however, no compulsion to join a gild. In consequence, there was much competition from freedmen — foreign, particularly Greek, workmen who settled in Rome, as also from the domestic slaves who supplied the wants of the large families — reasons enough to prevent the trades from acquiring much importance.

"They had, however, their time-honored customs, consisting of sacrifices and festive gatherings at their inns, on which occasions their banners (*verilla*) and emblems were carried about the streets in procession. A wall-painting at Pompeii is most likely intended as an illustration of a carpenters' parade. A large wooden tray (*ferculum*), surmounted by a decorated baldachin,¹ is being carried on the shoulders of young workmen. On the tray stands a carpenter's bench in miniature, with two men at their work, the figure of Dædalus being seen in the foreground."

Reading this brief description, the principal details of which have already been given in our preceding pages, the student can hardly fail to be struck with the far closer resemblance the usages of Freemasonry bear to those Roman colleges or gilds, than they do to those of the Jewish workmen at the Temple, as we learn them from the very imperfect and unsatisfactory allusions contained in the Bible or in the *Antiquities* of Josephus. One can hardly fail to see that the birth of Freemasonry from the former is a far more reasonable theory than a derivation from the latter.

Though but indirectly and remotely connected with this subject, one fact may be mentioned that shows how much the spirit of the gild organization, itself the spirit of Freemasonry, had impressed itself upon the common life of the Romans.

The benefit societies of the present day, which are said to be and most probably are but coarse imitations of the Masonic Lodges, were not unknown to the ancient Romans. They had their burial-clubs, called *Collegia Tenuirom*, the literal meaning of which is Gilds of the Poor. They were, as their name really suggests, societies formed by the poorer classes, from whose funds, derived from annual contributions, the expenses of the

¹ A rich cover. So-called from the Italian word "Baldacco," meaning Bagdad, where cloth for canopies was made.

burial of a member were defrayed and a certain sum was paid to the surviving family.¹

We have shown that there existed among the Romans gild-like associations of craftsmen, presenting a very close resemblance in their customs and purposes to the guilds or corporations of Stone-masons of the Middle Ages, who are admitted to have been the forerunners of the Speculative Freemasons of the 18th century and of the present day. The further connection of these two institutions can be identified only by tracing the progress of the Roman colleges from their rise in the reign of Numa, to their change in character at the time of the decline and fall of the Empire, and their becoming a part of the architectural associations which sprang up in those parts of Europe which had once been Roman provinces.

The inquiry into this difficult but interesting topic must be separately considered and we shall proceed to examine in a following chapter the evidence in the case.

¹ Hueffer's Translation from third German edition, New York, 1875, p. 591.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

GROWTH OF THE ROMAN COLLEGES



It has been shown by us that Numa, in his wise efforts to improve the civilization of the early Romans, and to bring together in a harmonious way the differing elements of the people, had instituted colleges or gilds of mechanics. We shall not mix up this question by any reference to the theory of Niebuhr and his followers who have not believed in the existence of any true history at that period, but who think every theory connected with royal Rome as merely based upon myth and tradition.

We can fairly content ourselves with the fact that when Roman history began to present itself under the authentic form of records, the former existence of these gilds was fully admitted. We find it ample for the present purpose to accept the generally received opinion. While it is not denied that in early Rome such gilds prevail, we may safely believe that their origin is due to some early reformer. This pioneer organizer may be represented by the name of Numa as well as by any other.

Treating the subject of the rise and progress of these colleges or gilds, we shall pursue the course of Roman history as it has been generally received by scholars. As we advance to later times we shall find ourselves all the more helped by the classical writers of the time, and by many monuments and inscriptions. Except the mere question whether they were first established by Numa or by somebody else, in what Niebuhr would call prehistoric Rome — a question of but little or no importance in reference to their connection with the gilds of the Middle Ages — there is no statement concerning them that is not a part of authentic history.

We see that it has therefore been proved that these colleges were gild-like in their organization; that they had all the legal

rights of a corporation; that they elected their own members; that they were governed by certain officers chosen by the votes of the society; that they were supported by monthly contributions; that they had a gild-chest or common fund, which was the property of the corporation; that they had a special god of their own — just as later on the gilds of the Middle Ages had a patron saint of their own particular choice—in honor of whom they performed religious rites; that they had honorary members not belonging to the Craft, who, as patrons of the colleges, and being selected from the wealthiest and most influential families of the Republic or the Empire, protected their interests; and finally, that they had, like our modern corporations, sets of laws, regulations, usages, and a jurisdiction which were all approved by the authority of the state.

While tracing the progress of the Colleges of Artificers through the reigns of the seven Kings, the long period of the Republic and the rise and fall of the Empire, we need not dwell upon the age of Romulus. Though the narrative of his reign was accepted as authentic by Dionysius and Plutarch, by Livy and Cicero, the unbelief of modern scholars, stimulated by their researches, has led to the very general opinion that the first of the Roman kings was a myth and that his history was founded, as Niebuhr says, on a heroic lay. Yet even he admits that portions of the narrative are to be accepted as matters of fact. Made up as it has been of traditions, which were believed from the earliest periods, the reign and the character of Romulus may be seen as an exhibit and pattern of that of the time in which he is supposed to have lived.

From these traditions we learn that he was, as the founder of an empire might well be supposed to be, a warlike king, who was engaged in constant contests with the inhabitants of neighboring and rival cities. Though claimed to have been a legislator of the highest order, who exercised his skill in the organization of a new state, the necessity of defending his territory from attack and of increasing its limits, gave him but little opportunity or inclination to improve the arts of peace.

He is said to have created those religious institutions of the Romans, which were afterward developed into greater maturity by Numa and some of his successors. But he discouraged the

study of the arts, and forbade the citizens the practice of all mechanical and commercial trades, which were left to foreigners and slaves, while the free Romans were confined to agricultural labors and warlike pursuits.

His successor, Numa, was, on the contrary, noted for his quiet character. During his long reign of forty-three years, the state over which he ruled enjoyed a constant flow of peace. There were no domestic troubles and no foreign wars. He was not only a king but a philosopher, and by a peculiar expression which Niebuhr attempts, but vainly, to explain, he was said to be a disciple of the wise Pythagoras. He established the religious institutes and regulations, whose cruder form had been credited to Romulus; he built several temples, especially that of Janus; he reformed the calendar; instituted public markets and festivals; encouraged the pursuit of agriculture and the mechanic arts; and created the brotherhoods or corporations of the trades and handicraftsmen, which continued to exist through the whole history of the Roman state under the name he had originally given them of Colleges of Artificers.

Tullus Hostilius was the successor and a marked contrast to Numa. He was a warlike monarch, and his reign had a series of military successes. He was not, like his predecessor, of a religious turn of mind, and it was only in moments of fear, says Livy,¹ that he made vows to build temples or offered up any rites of sacrifice to the gods. Heineccius² thinks it probable that he abolished the craft associations which had been instituted by Numa, because they were likely to divert the citizens from military pursuits and to deprive him of the services of active soldiers.

Ancus Martius, the fourth king, was the grandson of Numa. He revived the institutions of his grandfather and brought the Romans back from the warlike habits of the previous reign to a study of the arts of peace. With this view he caused the sacred institutes of Numa to be written out by the Pontifex Maximus upon tablets and to be exhibited to the inspection of the public.³

¹ "In re trepida," lib. i, 27.

² "De collegiis et corporibus opificum."

³ Sir George Cornwall Lewis, "An Inquiry into the Credibility of the Early Roman History," ii, 465.

Under his reign, the colleges must have revived from the restraint they had endured under his predecessor.

The history of the next king, Tarquinius Priscus, if we are to judge from the legends upon which it is founded, affords no reason for believing that his reign was unfavorable to the craft associations. He appears to have been a patron of architecture and of a constructive character. He is said to have adorned the Forum, to have formed the Circus Maximus, to have constructed the *Cloacæ* or sewers, to have laid the foundations of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and to have built a stone wall around the city. All these labors would have required the aid of architects and builders, and we suppose that the corporations or colleges of these craftsmen were encouraged by a monarch so well disposed to the improved practice of the arts of construction.

Servius Tullius, the sixth king, has had the reputation of a reformer. He was the first to make a census of the people, and to arrange them into classes.

Florus says that he made the division in *curiæ* and colleges, and that things were so ordered that all ranks and grades of property, station, age, occupation, and office must have been well marked. In this reign the colleges and craftsmen took a recognized position among the classes of the community.

Tarquinius Superbus, the last of the race of Roman kings, whose name has been stained by the record of his tyranny, was the enemy of the people. His life was that of a despot. He surrounded himself with a body-guard to protect his person; he forbid all assemblies of the people either in the country or in the city, so that no opportunity might be afforded them of consulting on the affairs of the state; he occupied them in forced labors for the construction of the sewers and the completion of the Circus; he repealed all the popular laws of his predecessor; abolished the fair arrangement into classes which had been made by the census; and crushed the colleges and craft sodalities. As the natural and expected result of this severe course, the people rose to the demand of their liberties. Tarquin and his family were forever banished, the kingdom ceased to exist, and on its ruins arose the Republic.

For a time after the people expelled the king, the patricians or nobles ruled over the plebeians or the common people with a hand

not always light. Dissensions sprang up between the two, the oppressors and the oppressed. The Colleges of Artificers became a subject of suspicion and dislike to the former class, because as these associations were wholly made up out of the latter, they were supposed to be the breeders of discontent and bodies in which parties of traitors would be nourished.

Nevertheless, one of the first acts of the Consular government was to re-establish the mild and kindly laws of Servius Tullius, and to permit the free meetings of the people, whence resulted the restoring of the colleges.

The severity of a famine which occurred in the Year of the City 276 is credited by Dionysius of Halicarnassus to the fact that the number of women, children, slaves, and handicraftsmen, who were classes not producing food, was three times greater than that of the citizens who were engaged in agricultural pursuits.

Though history, such as it was at that time, is silent on the subject, yet it must be evident that the continual discords for many of the early years of the Republic, between the Patricians and the Plebeians, seriously affected the interests of the Colleges of Artificers and secured to them only broken periods of fitful activity.

But when the people had taken from the Senate the Tribuneship by which they became a part of the governing power, and the right of holding offices of honor and of entering the priesthood, the colleges of handicraftsmen appear to have been more firmly founded. The laws of the Twelve Tables, adopted in the Year of the City 302, confirmed their privileges, a decree which Gaius in his Commentary on these laws thinks was suggested by and copied from the decree of Solon in reference to similar associations among the Greeks.

We do find that at one period the Senate had set aside the colleges, but eight years afterward they were restored by the Tribune Publius Clodius.

From that time the Roman citizens began to pay much attention to the arts and to mechanics. But though the craftsmen were united in the Tribes and had the right of voting, they were not highly respected and were not permitted to serve in the army except on unusual occasions, such as domestic or civil troubles.¹

¹ "Sigonio de ant. jur. civil. Rom."

Nevertheless, a great many new colleges were created, some by legal order and some by voluntary association. Such, for example, were the colleges of Ship Carpenters, of Smiths, and especially the *Collegia Structorum*, or Colleges of Builders, who were the same as the *Fabrii Cæmentarii*, or as it must be literally translated, the Stone-masons.

But these guilds or Colleges of Artificers were not confined to the city of Rome. They spread into the provinces and the municipal cities, or those which had been invested with the right of Roman citizenship.

For a long period these corporations of workmen pursued a quiet and creditable course, engaged in the lawful pursuit of the various trades and handicrafts.

But the number in time greatly increased; Clodius, the Tribune, in setting aside the decree of the Senate which had suppressed them, unfortunately extended the privilege to slaves and foreigners of creating new colleges or of uniting with the old ones. Hence many of these sodalities gradually sank into factions and political clubs, and thus became dangerous to the state.

This was not the only fault. The classical writers speak in terms of severe criticism of the costly feasts in which many of the colleges indulged. They carried this species of dissipation to such an extent, that Varro complains that the wasteful banquets of the colleges had greatly increased the price of food at Rome.

These follies were of gradual growth. The colleges continued to exercise their functions during the existence of the Republic, and were found in a flourishing condition at the advent of the Empire.

We can not suppose that in a change of government from the simplicity of a democracy to the evils of a monarchy, based on a revolution, the faults of political trickery and rash conduct would not increase rather than abate.

Hence we find the emperors generally opposed to the increase of these sodalities, and there are frequent decrees suspending or suppressing them. But it must be remarked that this opposition appears to have been directed rather against the creation of new corporations than to the wiping out of the old ones.

To properly value the true condition of the Roman Colleges of Workmen, we must refer to the fact that while there were a

certain number of them which had existed from the earliest period, being the continuation of the primitive system established by Numa, and which had, except at the various periods of suspicion, been tolerated and even aided by the government, there were many others which had sprung up in later times, and which were formed by the voluntary association of individuals.

These bodies were for the most part the creation of political factions, whose revolutionary designs were sought to be concealed in the privacy of secret consultations, or sometimes of less worthy craftsmen who, not having been admitted into the fellowship of the old colleges, were willing to set up a rivalry in business.

Thus there had arisen a distinction well recognized in the decrees of the Senate, or of the Emperors, and constantly referred to in the various codes of Roman law.

This distinction of the bodies of workmen was into lawful and unlawful colleges, or, to use the legal terms, into *Collegia licita* and *Collegia illicita*. The voluntary associations, to which allusion had just been made, were of the latter class. They were illicit or illegal colleges, and held a somewhat similar relation to the old and lawful colleges that, in modern times, an unincorporated society does in its privileges and franchises to a corporation. The comparison goes so far at least as this, that the illicit colleges, like the unincorporated societies of the present day, had no recognition in law — in other words, possessed no rights which the law recognized. But, in another respect, the analogy fails. The illicit colleges were not only unrecognized, but were actually opposed by the state, an interference to which our associations without charters of incorporation are not subjected. If the law does not protect them, it does not hurt them. They are allowed, if guilty of no violation of the laws, to go on without injury or hindrance.

But this was not the happy lot of the illegal colleges. They were repeatedly denounced and suppressed by the state, which looked upon them always as associations of a dangerous character.

Some have supposed that it was the policy of the Empire to destroy the corporations of craftsmen originally instituted by Numa, and decrees and laws have been quoted to prove that belief. If such had been the case, we should meet with the greatest difficulty in tracing back the corporations of builders of the

Middle Ages, to the Roman colleges. The total and lasting blotting out at any time of these bodies would naturally destroy the links of that chain of continuity absolutely necessary to identify the one with the other in the progress of history.

But we can not find any evidence that the earliest colleges, and especially those of the builders, ever were destroyed. The decrees of the Senate and of the Emperors were directed against the new, and not against the old, associations of craftsmen.

Thus Suetonius tells us that Julius Cæsar abolished "all colleges except those which had been anciently constituted." The same author informs us that Augustus "dissolved all colleges except the old and lawful."¹

A like reservation is made in all references through the Digest of Justinian, to any decrees or laws affecting these corporations. It is only *Collegia illicita* against which the penalties of law are to be enforced. "It is permitted to assemble for religious purposes," says the Digest, "provided that by this the decree of the Senate prohibiting illicit colleges is not contravened." Ulpian says that "Illicit colleges are forbidden under the same penalties as are adjudged to armed men who take possession of temples or public places."

There was a very wholesome fear, both in the times of the Republic and under the Emperors, of those illegal associations, voluntarily assembled. They were felt to be too often for the promotion of factions or the encouragement of political opinions dangerous to the state.

When the greater part of the city of Nicomedia had been destroyed by fire, Pliny,² then the governor of Bithynia, applied to Trajan for permission to organize for the purpose of rebuilding a College of Masons (*Collegium Fabrorum*), not of more than one hundred and fifty artisans, and in which he would take care, by leaving out every person who was not a Mason, that the purposes of the new college should not be diverted into an improper direction.

There is a good deal of suggestive history in this passage of Pliny's letter to the Emperor. It indicates, in the first place, that

¹ "Cuncta Collegia prætor antiquitus constituta distraxit" and "Collegia prætor antiqua et legitima dissolvit," says the Roman biographer.

² See the 42d and 43d Epistles for the letters on this subject between Pliny and the Emperor Trajan.

it was not unusual to create new Colleges of Masons¹ for special purposes, which purposes being accomplished, the colleges were dissolved. Pliny would hardly have asked permission to perform an act of such importance, if it had not been allowed by custom.

But this brings us very near to the similar custom of the Stone-masons in the Middle Ages, who, we know, were accustomed to create their temporary or especial Lodges of workmen, when any building was to be undertaken. We see in this, if not a proof of the direct continuation of the Freemasons of the Middle Ages from the Roman colleges (which Brother Findel was unwilling to admit), at least a very close imitation in an interesting point, by the former of the customs of the latter.

In the next place, we learn from this epistle of Pliny that it was not unusual to admit into these colleges of workmen members who were not of the Craft, and that this was often done for an evil purpose. On this fact, indeed, was based the objection of the state to illicit colleges. Voluntary associations were often formed which, assuming the name and pretending to follow the professions of the regular colleges, consisted really, in great part, of non-operative persons who met together in secret to concoct political and seditious schemes.

If the illicit colleges had confined themselves to a rivalry in work with the regular bodies, it is not likely that the state would have meddled with the contests between regular and irregular workmen, or, as in after-times they were called, Freemasons and Cowans. Government does not at this day, in any country, interfere between constitutional and clandestine Lodges of Freemasons. It leaves, as it is probable that it would have done in Rome, the settlement of the trouble to the Masonic law.

But it was the admission of these non-operative members into the illicit colleges, that converted them from bodies of honest workmen into political clubs, that made all the evil and awoke the suspicions and the interference of the state.

Trajan therefore declined to permit the creation of a new and temporary college at Nicomedia, and he gives the reason for his refusal in these words to Pliny: "You have suggested the estab-

¹ Dr. Mackey did not hesitate to translate the words "Collegium Fabrorum" into the English "College of Masons." The whole tenor of the classical writings and especially the inscriptions was clear to him that it was not usual to add to the generic word *faber* a distinctive ending to indicate that one was a worker in stone or in marble.

lishment of a College of Masons (*Collegium Fabrorum*) at Nicomedia, after the example of many other cities. But we should not forget that this province, and especially its cities, have been greatly troubled by this kind of factions. Whatever name we may give to them for any cause, bodies of men, however small in number, who are drawn together by the same design, will become political clubs."

The last two words are in the original *Hetæriæ*. This from the Greek, among which people *Hetæriæ* or *Hetairiai* were associations originally instituted for friendly purposes or for mutual relief, like our benefit societies. They became, in later times, very common in the Greek cities of the Roman Empire, but, as Kennedy says, "were looked on with suspicion by the emperors as leading to political combinations."¹

We may safely arrive at the conclusion that the primitive colleges of artisans, who derived their origin from the time of Numa, and to which we may trace the idea of the mediæval guilds of Freemasons, were generally undisturbed by the government, whether kingly, republican, or imperial, and continued their existence and their activity to a very late period in the history of the Empire. The attacks upon the colleges of which we read, refer only to those illegal and irregular ones, which, not confining their operations within the legitimate limits of their craft, were voluntary associations made up, for the most part, of non-operative members, who were engaged in party schemes against the powers of the state.

This point being settled, we may next direct our attention to the condition of these colleges, and especially the Colleges of Freemasons, or *Collegia Fabrorum* (for with them only are we concerned), in the Empire and in the provinces until the final overthrow of the Roman power.

The Romans, in the earlier portion of their history, were not noted for taste or refinement. The people were entirely military in their character, and they preferred the rude arts of war rather than the polished ones of peace. Architecture, therefore, was in a debased condition. The principles of building extended only to the construction of a shelter from the weather. Houses were of the rudest form, and, as their name meant, were merely cover-

¹ Smith, "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities," article *Eranoi*.

ings from the sun and rain. "These sheds of theirs," says Spence, "were more like the caves of wild beasts than the habitations of men; and rather flung together, as chance led them, than formed into regular streets and openings. Their walls were half mud; and their roofs but pieces of boards stuck together."¹

The builders of the college established by Numa could at that time have been occupied only in the most inglorious part of their profession. They were engaged in works of utility and absolute necessity, and could have had no knowledge of or inclination for ornament. The most bungling carpenter or bricklayer of the present time must have greatly surpassed them in skill.

During that period the colleges furnished no architects to the army. The only workmen that we find there were the smiths and the carpenters. They were soldiers who exercised with but little need of skill the mysteries of these trades, being employed in the care of weapons and in the repairs about the camp. Not until centuries afterward were workmen supplied by the colleges and authorized by the state to go with the legions in their campaigns and in their occupation of conquered provinces.²

Not until about the era of Augustus — that monarch who boasted that he had found Rome built of brick and left it a city of marble — that the Romans began to exhibit a fondness for the fine arts, and especially for architecture. Marcellus, the conqueror of Syracuse, had, two centuries before, planted the seeds of a refined taste in his countrymen, and invited the bitter words of the monkish Cato, by the works of Grecian art he brought to Rome from the spoil of the city he had conquered. To him, therefore, has been credited the introduction of the arts into Rome.

But it is to Augustus that architecture was indebted for the high position as an art that it assumed among the Romans. From the period of his reign must we date the rise of the Colleges of Builders, associations of architects, whose trained and encouraged genius produced its influence upon the conquered provinces where they went with the Roman legions.

Pittacus says, in his *Lexicon of Roman Antiquities*,³ that those workmen who at first confined their labors to the city of Rome,

¹ Spence, "Polymatis," Dialogue V, p. 36.

² Pittacus, "Lexicon Antiquitatum Romanorum," article *Fabri*.

³ "Lexicon Antiquitatum Romanorum," article *Collegium*.

afterward spread over the whole of Italy and then into the various provinces of the empire, furnishing everything that was needed by the army.

The government seems to have taken especial care of these colleges, for besides the officers elected by the members themselves, the state placed over them other officers, whose duty it was to give them a general superintendence. In the provinces this duty was entrusted to the proconsul or governor. Thus we have seen that Pliny, as governor of the province of Bithynia, proposed to create a College of Builders, over which he was to exercise a control such as would regulate it in the admission of its members. In the municipal cities this officer was called sometimes a *Procurator*, and sometimes a *Præpositus*.

The artisans were under the government of a Prefect in every legion, an official who was styled the *Præfectus Fabrorum*, or Prefect of the Artisans. We are not willing to confuse this officer with the Prefect of the Camp, who was, like our modern quartermaster, of a purely military character. There is an inscription copied by Reinesius,¹ in which occur the words *Faber et Præf. Fabr. Leg., XX.*, meaning, Artificer and Prefect of the Artificers. This would seem to imply that the Prefect himself was sometimes, if not always, a Freemason, "one of the Craft."

Under the officer appointed by the state, as the general superintendent of the artificers of the college, was a subordinate one, appointed also by the state or perhaps by himself, whose duty it was to inspect and to direct the labors of the workmen, and to see that everything was done in an artistic and workmanlike manner. He was, in fact, what in later times the Freemasons called the *Magister Operis*, or Master of the Work.

When, therefore, in Gaul, in Britain, or in any other province which had been entered by the legions, we meet with a monument of the labors of these Roman Freemasons, which some well-preserved inscription attests to have been the work of a *Collegium Fabrorum*, or College of Freemasons, we may suppose that it was done in the following manner:

In the first place, the men, the materials, the site, the character of the building, and all other matters relating to the general

¹ Thomas Reinesius, born 1587, died 1667. German physician and editor of Greek and Roman authors and an authority on inscriptions.

design, were determined by the Proconsul, Procurator, Commander of the Legion, or whoever had been appointed by the state or the emperor as superintendent of the artificers and the colleges.

The workmen being then assembled, commenced their labors by congregating themselves, or being congregated, into a college, if such a college did not already exist, and they were placed under the immediate control and direction of a subordinate officer, who was an artificer or an architect, and who regulated their labors, made designs or plans, and corrected the errors of the workmen.

In all this we see a great likeness to the method pursued by the Operative Stonemasons of the Middle Ages.

First, there was a prelate, nobleman, or man of wealth and dignity, who had formed the design of building: a cathedral, an abbey, or a castle. In the old English Constitutions this great personage is always referred to as "the Lord," and the work or building was called "the Lord's Work."

Having assembled in huts or temporary dwellings around the site of the edifice they were about to erect, they formed a Lodge, which was under the control of a Master. There was also the architect, or Master of the Works, who was responsible for the faithful doing of the task.

The convenience of military operations, such as the placing or removal of camps, and the passage of armies from one place to another, required that the legions should carry with them in their marches architects and competent workmen to accomplish these objects. Bergerius, who wrote a treatise *On the Public and Military Roads of the Roman Empire*,¹ estimates, with perhaps some excess, that the number of architects and workmen engaged in the Roman states in the repairs of roads, the construction of bridges and other works of a similar kind, exceeded those employed in the building of the Pyramids of Egypt and the Temple of Solomon.

Of these a great number were distributed among the legions; accompanied them in their marches; remained with them wherever they were stationed; created their colleges and proceeded to the erection of works, sometimes of a temporary and sometimes of a more lasting character.

¹ "De publicis et militaribus Imperii Romani Viis," contained in vol. X of the "*Thesaurus Antiq. Rom.*" of Grævius.

Dr. Krause says, citing as his authority the *Corpus Juris*, the general laws, and the inscriptions, that in every legion there were corporations or colleges of workmen who were employed for building and other purposes needed in military operations.

Therefore, in tracing the advance of the Roman legions into the various colonies, we are also tracing the advance of the Roman architects and builders who went with them. When the legion stopped in its progress and made any colony its temporary home, it exercised all the influence of a conquering army of civilized soldiers over a country of rude unlearned people. Of all these influences of civilization the one that has been the most powerful was that of the architects who substituted for the rough constructions which they found in the countries which had been invaded, the more refined principles of building. The monuments of the edifices erected in Spain, in Gaul, and in Britain, have, for the most part, disappeared under the destructive agencies of time; but their memorials remain to us in ruins, in inscriptions, and in the history of the improved condition of architecture, among these untrained and unlettered peoples.

It is true, that it grew up in later times, and greatly was it altered by the instructions of Byzantine artists, but the first growth and outspring of the architecture practiced by the mediæval gilds of Freemasons must be traced to the introduction of the art into the Roman provinces by the Colleges of Builders which accompanied the Roman legions in the stream of conquest that was followed by these victorious armies.

We have thus presented the details of the history of these Roman Colleges of Builders from their organization by Numa, through the several periods of regal, of republican, and of imperial Rome. We have shown their continued existence and then their spread into the municipal or free cities and into the conquered provinces, impressing everywhere the evidences of an active and enlightening influence on the art of building. At this stage of our progress it is proper that we should now pause to examine the memorials of their labors in the several provinces and colonies.

Thus we shall be able to establish the first link in that chain which connects the Freemasonry of the Middle Ages and more recent periods of Europe with the building corporations of Rome, the Collegia.

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

THE FIRST LINK: SETTLEMENT OF ROMAN COLLEGES OF ARTIFICERS IN THE PROVINCES OF THE EMPIRE



THE first link of the chain connecting the Roman Colleges of Artificers with the building corporations of the Middle Ages, is found in the spreading out and settlement of the former in the conquered colonies of Rome. We now feel from what has been submitted that it is fair to say it has been satisfactorily shown that the Freemasons at Rome were incorporated into colleges, where the principles of their art were diligently studied and taught to younger members who stood for that purpose in the place occupied by the Apprentices in the Stonemasons' Lodges at a long and later period.

We have seen that an immunity or freedom from all public services was granted by the Emperor Constantine to workmen, and among others to architects for the express reason that they might have the opportunity of gaining a knowledge of their professions and of teaching that information and art to their disciples.

These architects or Master Builders, one of whom was always appointed to every legion with workmen from the colleges under him, carried the skill which they had been enabled to acquire at home, with them into the colonies or provinces they visited. There, if they remained long enough, which was usually the case, as the legions were for the most part stationed for extended periods, they erected, besides the military defences constructed for the safety of the army, and the roads which they opened for its convenience, more lasting buildings, such as temples. Of this we have abundant evidence in the ruins which still remain of some of these structures, ruins so decayed and wasted as to supply us with only very limited and yet sufficient evidence of their former existence and even splendor. More especially is this the case in

the many inscriptions on stone or marble tablets, hundreds of which, in every province, have been collected by Gruter, Muratori, Reinesius and other writers who have devoted themselves to the study of Roman antiquities.

Thus we shall find in Spain, in Gaul, and in Britain abundant evidences, of the kind referred to, of these labors of the Roman architects, while these provinces were under Roman control. It can not be denied that this must have exercised a decided influence on the original inhabitants and have introduced a more refined taste and a superior skill in the art of building. Nor was the influence thus exerted of an altogether short-lived nature. When the Roman control ceased, and the legions were withdrawn to sustain the feeble powers of a decaying empire, threatened by the wild foes of the north with destruction, not all the Romans who had come with the legions, or since their coming made homes in the country, left with them. A very long series of years had passed. Many of these architects and builders had been naturalized, as it were, and were unwilling to depart from the homes they had made. They remained, and continued to teach, preserve and extend among the people with whom they were living the skill and the customs which they had originally brought from Rome.

Viollet-le-Duc says, in his *Dictionary of Architecture*,¹ that in the Middle Ages the workmen of the southern cities of Europe preserved the Roman traditions, and that in them the corporations or colleges did not cease to exist, but that these bodies were not established in the northern cities until the time of the affranchisement or freeing of the communes, a commune being the smallest political subdivision.

Even if this were the fact, it would only be lengthening the chain of connection. It is fair to suppose that the corporations of the north, at whatever later period they were established, must have adopted the system of fraternities from the southern cities where they had long existed as a part of the Roman tradition. So that even in this view the chain is unbroken which binds the corporations of builders of the Middle Ages with those of Rome.

But we believe that it will hereafter be shown to be historically true that the traditions and the usages of the Roman colleges were well preserved in the early period of English architecture, and

¹ "Dictionnaire Raisonné de l'Architecture de XI^{me} au XVI^{me} Siècle," tome vi, p. 346.

that out of these traditions sprang, in part, the regulations of the Saxon gilds. But this is a question for future consideration when we come to the investigation of the after-Roman architecture of Gaul and England.

Evidences of the influence of the Roman colleges on the province of Spain are very abundant, arising from the peculiar relations of that province to the Empire.

Upon the expelling of the Carthaginians from Spain, which occurred 206 B.C., it was erected into a Roman province, at least so much as had been conquered by the Romans under the Scipios, which did not include more than half of the peninsula. Thenceforward it was governed sometimes by one prætor and sometimes by two, and two legions were always kept posted in the province.

The influence of this political arrangement was of the most important character. The soldiers married with the native women, and thus became so weaned from Italy that when the legions were disbanded, many of them refused to return home, and continued their residence in Spain.¹

A little more than a century after its conquest, such a system of internal communication had been established by the opening of roads, and especially the military one of Pompey over the Pyrenees Mountains, that the country was laid open to travelers, many of whom settled there. In the time of Strabo, a portion of the province had been so changed in manners as to have become almost Roman. The great privilege of citizenship was granted to many of the inhabitants, and they had even forgotten their native language.

Spain, thus becoming more closely connected with the Empire than any of the other provinces, furnished, as it is well known, some distinguished names to Latin literature, such as Lucanus, the poet, the older and the younger Seneca, Columella, Quintilian, and the epigram expert, Martial.

During the reign of Augustus many considerable colonies were founded, as represented by the modern cities of Zaragossa, Merida, Badajoz, and many others. In these cities the art of building flourished. They were adorned with some of the finest productions of Roman architecture, of many of which the grand ruins still

¹ Niebuhr, "Lectures on Roman History," ii, p. 208.

remain, while temples, theaters, baths, circuses, and other public edifices, which had been erected by the Roman Freemasons, have perished through the waste of time and the destructive influences of ravaging armies and interstate wars.

Well known is it that Spain was, from the earliest times, an object of the grasping ambition of foreign peoples, and that it was in turn invaded and conquered by the Phœnicians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Goths, and the Arabs. All of these nations were attracted by the delights of the climate, the fertility of the soil, and the richness of the mines. Equally is it true and fully on record that the Romans, from the longer duration of their control and from the more solid character of the edifices which they constructed, have left a greater number of architectural monuments, and these in a better state of preservation, than the other nations who went before or followed them.¹

But the invasion of the Goths, after the departure of the Romans, and the later more permanent occupation of the peninsula by the Saracenic Arabs or Moors, so completely withdrew the architects of Spain from all communication with those of the rest of Europe, and so thoroughly wiped out all effects of the earlier Roman influence, that it is impossible to trace an unbroken connection between the Roman Colleges of Freemasons, who left behind such wonderful evidences of their skill, and the guilds or corporations of the Middle Ages, that in other countries were their successors.

We must note the curious historical fact that while of all the Roman provinces Spain was the one in which the Roman control was most firmly established, it was also the one in which, after the decay of the Empire, all the results of that autocracy were the most thoroughly wiped out.

Spain has, therefore, been alluded to on the present occasion not with any intention of making it a part of that train of succession which, beginning with the colleges of Numa, ended in the guilds of Stonemasons of the Middle Ages, but because it furnishes a very complete instance of how these Roman Colleges of Artificers extended their labors and introduced their art into foreign countries.

¹ Don Caen-Bermudez, "Sumario de las Antigüedades Romanas que hay in España," Madrid, p. 2.

In the three other provinces of the Western Empire, the two Gauls and Britain, the connection of the Roman Colleges with the gilds or corporations which sprang up later, may be more readily traced.

Cisalpine or Citerior Gaul was the name given by the classical writers to that part of Gallia which was south of the Alpine mountains, and formed what is more familiarly known as northern Italy. Deriving its first settlement, if we may trust to the authority of Livy, which however, Niebuhr rejects, by an immigration of the Gauls beyond the mountains, in the time of Tarquinius Priscus,¹ these people were for centuries engaged in struggles with the Romans, whose attempts to subdue them were always unsuccessful. When Hannibal, the Carthaginian general, attacked Italy and sought the destruction of Rome and the Roman power, many of them willingly became his allies.

About two hundred years before the Christian era, the two most important tribes, the Insubrians and the Boians, were subdued by the Roman legions under the Consuls C. Cornelius Cethegus and Q. Minucius Rufus, and from that time to the reign of Augustus, Cisalpine Gaul came slowly but surely under the Roman control. When it was established as a Roman province, it was rapidly filled with a Roman population, and became one of the most valuable of the Roman possessions. Most of the towns received that political status known as the *Jus Latii*, or the *Latinitas*, by which they were placed in a middle position between strangers and the Roman citizens, and the pure right of citizenship was bestowed on their magistrates, which was, in the time of Cæsar, extended to all the inhabitants, the larger towns being made municipalities.

Fifty years before Christ all Cisalpine Gaul had been invested with the right of citizenship, and consisted of Roman communities organized after the Roman pattern. This meant the introduction among the people of Roman civilization and refinement. Among the arts that were encouraged, that of architecture was not the least. We have ample evidence in the still remaining monuments and in inscriptions that the Roman architects or members of the colleges were busily employed in the labors of their Craft.

¹ Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, born 616, died 579 years before Christ, was fifth King of Rome; noted for his wisdom and bravery.

The proofs of this fact are to be found in the modern cities of northern Italy. These are the successors of the Cisalpine colonies, and they have preserved in their museums or in private collections the memorials and relics of their ancient prosperity and refinement.

Thus Mutina, now the modern Modena in northern Italy, was one of the most flourishing of the Lombard towns. Cicero¹ did not hesitate to call it "the strongest and most splendid colony of the Roman people." So wealthy was this city as to have been able to support for a long time the large army of Brutus. At length it fell into decay, but was never abandoned, and again rose to prosperity in the Middle Ages under the name of Modena, by which it is still known. Although the great architectural remains of the ancient city were employed in the construction of the cathedral and other public buildings of the modern one, or were buried under the layers of flood and river deposits of gravel and soil, yet the Museum of Modena contains a valuable collection of tablets from tombs and of inscriptions which have been dug up at various times and which furnish evidence of the existence and the labors of the Roman architects and builders under the Empire.

There was another town of Cisalpine Gaul, called Aquileia, built by the Romans to defend the fertile plains of Italy on the northeast from the inroads of savage tribes. Two centuries before Christ it was settled by several thousand colonists from Rome and became a place of great commercial prosperity. In the 5th century it was plundered and burnt by Attila, King of the Huns. Though it never again became a place of importance, it was always inhabited, and in the 6th century was the see of a bishop, and, to borrow the language of Bunbury,² "It maintained a sickly existence throughout the Middle Ages." At the present day it is an obscure village, with only a cathedral.

Although Aquileia contains no vestiges of Roman edifices, the site, says the same writer, Bunbury, "abounds with remains of antiquity, coins, engraved stones, and other minor objects as well as shafts and capitals of columns, fragments of frieze, etc.,

¹ Marcus Tullius Cicero, born 106, died 43 years before Christ; famous Roman orator and statesman.

² Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography."

the splendour and beauty of which sufficiently attest the magnificence of the ancient city." Among the inscriptions found there are some which relate to the temple and the worship of Belenus, a local sun-god whom the Romans identified with Apollo. All the works of which we have these memorials must have been effected by the Roman architects, who, with their colleges, were surely among the six or seven thousand who emigrated from Rome and built up the city.

Bononia, or the modern Bologna, was built, it is supposed, by the Tuscans, and was raised to the rank of a Roman colony about two centuries before Christ. It continued to be an important and flourishing city under the Empire. Though it suffered decay, it was able, in the 5th century, to withstand successfully the attacks of Alaric, King of the Goths. It never lost the continuity of its existence, but after the fall of the Empire regained, in a great measure, its prosperity, and at length assumed, in the Middle Ages, a lead among the cities of northern Italy which it still retains. Far from probable is it that Bononia soon lost its traditions of those arts it practiced when a Roman colony, and which are attested by fragments of sculpture and traditions which have been preserved.

The modern city of Ivrea, which is an important place, was the ancient Eporedia, a Roman colony founded about one hundred years before Christ. The strength of its position, as commanding two important roads through the Alps, gave it great military value, and it does not, therefore, appear to have been subjected to any great process of decay. As late as the close of the 4th century it was a considerable town and was occupied, as a military station, by part of a legion. The modern city still contains a fine Roman tomb and some other remains of its ancient splendor.

But the most interesting of all the cities of Cisalpine Gaul, in any reference to the connection of the Roman Colleges, which labored there, with the fraternities of the Middle Ages which succeeded them, is Comum, an important city at the foot of the Alps and on the borders of the Lake of Como. The present name of the city is Como. This city is supposed to have been the birth-place of both the elder and the younger Pliny, the latter of whom

made it his favorite residence, and established in it a school of learning.

Under the Empire Como was a flourishing municipality, and its prosperity was secured by the beauty and convenience of its position at the end of the lake, for it became the point of embarkation for travelers who were proceeding to cross the Rhætian Alps. The city retained its prosperity to the close of the Roman Empire. In the 4th century a fleet was stationed there for the protection of the lake. Cassiodorus speaks of it in the 6th century as one of the military bulwarks of Italy, and extols the richness of the palaces with which the shores of the lake in its vicinity were adorned.

Como continued to retain its importance in the Middle Ages, and it is from there that the "Masters of Como," the Traveling Freemasons, went back and forth over Europe in the 10th century, to erect cathedrals, monasteries, and palaces in the various countries which they visited. But this body of Craftsmen, whose acts form a most valuable portion of the historical testimony of the connection between the Roman Colleges of Artificers and the corporations of Freemasons in the Middle Ages, will be discussed and described in a more extended manner than at this stage of our inquiry where, for the present, this simple allusion to them must suffice.

We next come to consider the architectural condition of Transalpine Gaul, or Gaul proper, under the Roman government. This subject may now be briefly discussed, as the early condition of Roman architecture in Gaul will be more freely treated in another chapter.

The name of Transalpine Gaul was given by the Romans to that country extending from the Pyrenean mountains to the river Rhine, within which limits modern France is contained. This part of the world was first conquered by the Romans under Julius Cæsar, and remained a province of the Empire until its final decline. The Gauls are represented to have been a fierce and bloodthirsty people, though at the time of the conquest Cæsar found an improvement in the manners of some of the tribes. But their progress toward civilization and refinement was rapid after they came under the control of the Romans.

Cæsar had formed a legion of Gaulish soldiers whom he armed and drilled after the Roman style. Later, when he had arrived at the dictatorship he made these soldiers Roman citizens, and sent Roman colonies to several of the cities.

Under the Emperor Augustus, Gaul became rapidly Romanized. Schools were established in the large towns, and the Latin language and the Roman law were adopted. In religion a compromise was brought about and there was a mixture of Gallic and Roman worship, though wherever the Romans made a permanent settlement, temples were erected to the Roman gods.

Architectural works were pursued with great energy but with little foresight. Temples and other public buildings, together with bridges, roads, and aqueducts, were erected over all the country. These must have cost great sums of money. As the cost was wholly paid by the inhabitants without aid from the mother-government, great distress began to prevail among the people, which led to several uprisings.

Though the ambitions of the Roman architects had kept poor the colonists, the influence of refinement in art continued to prevail long after these troubles. Gaul shows us an almost unbroken series of links between the architecture of the Roman Colleges and that of the mediæval Freemasons.

That part of Gaul which lay along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, and by the Romans forcibly called the Province (Provincia), had been civilized and Romanized long before the conquest of the other parts of the country. It was in the towns of this province that the most extensive operations in architecture were exhibited. We must remark, however, that all over Gaul outside of the Provincia, as well as within it, there are ample evidences of the splendid style of architecture that was cultivated by the architects who accompanied the legions, or the colonists who went from Rome to settle in Gaulish towns.

Bætterræ, now Beziers, received a colony of soldiers of the seventh legion, who constructed a causeway, of which some traces still exist. There are also the vestiges of an amphitheater and the remains of an aqueduct.

Arelate, now known as Arles, was a city of the Provincia. The Roman remains are very numerous there; among them an obelisk or monumental pillar of Egyptian granite which was dug

up some centuries ago, and in 1675 was set up in one of the public squares. The amphitheater or open-air circus building was estimated as capable of holding twenty thousand persons. There is also an old cemetery which contains many ancient tombs, both Pagan and Christian.

Nemausus, the modern Nîmes, which was also a city of the Provincia, contains many remains of the skill of the old Roman architects and the splendor of their works. The amphitheater, not quite as large as that of Arles, is in a good state of preservation. There is also a temple still existing which, as Arthur Young says, in his *Travels in France*, is beyond comparison the most light, elegant, and pleasing building that he ever beheld. Under the modern name of "Maison Carrée," or the "Square House," it is now used as a museum of paintings and antiquities.

But the noblest monument that the Romans have left in Gaul is the aqueduct or waterway now called the *Pont du Gard*, which is between nine and twelve miles from Nîmes. The bridge on which the aqueduct was laid is still solid and strong, and is, says George Long, "a magnificent monument of the grandeur of Roman conceptions, and of the boldness of their execution."

We deem it useless to extend these descriptions farther. All over Gaul were cities colonized by the Romans, who gave to the native inhabitants a portion of their skill, their taste, and their refinement. Temples, amphitheaters, theaters, aqueducts, and public and private buildings of every kind are to be found in all the large and many of the small cities of modern France, which, sometimes well preserved and sometimes in ruins, always show that the spirit of architectural enterprise was imparted to the people under the Roman government and by Roman architects and builders. How well that spirit was preserved and how it became afterward developed in the Freemasonry of the Middle Ages will be shown the more clearly as we proceed in our further historical researches.

Britain was twice invaded by Cæsar, but on neither occasion did he stay long enough in the island to effect any influence on the inhabitants. Augustus afterward planned an expedition to Britain, but the project was never carried to success. Not until the time of Claudius was there any serious attempt at conquest. Under his orders an army was led by Aulus Plautus into the

southeastern part of the island. The city of Camalodunum, now Malden, was taken. Claudius, who had visited Britain to share in the triumphs of the victory, returned to Rome and assumed the surname of Britannicus in proof of his success, leaving his general, Plautus, to go forward and complete the conquest, which, however, he did not do.

Vespasian soon after subdued the Isle of Wight and took twenty of the *Oppida* or British towns. His son Titus also distinguished himself in many battles with the native tribes.

But though the island was at this time entered to some extent by the Roman legions, and the southern coasts were occupied by them, the island was not yet conquered. The struggle between the independent spirit of the natives and the ambitious designs of their Roman invaders lasted for nearly half a century, and the subjection of the whole island was not brought about until the reign of Domitian. Thereafter, Britain took the form and felt all the influences of a Roman province, but unlike Spain and Gaul, was a discontented one.

Probably it is too far away from the objects of the present work to trace, with any great detail, the progress of the Roman power under the various emperors who governed the island from the date of its conquest to the final withdrawal of the Roman armies in the beginning of the 5th century.

It is sufficient to say that during the period of time intervening between these two epochs, Britain had become completely Romanized. Colonies were founded, cities possessing the right of Roman citizenship were established, legions were scattered in various places, and soldiers and settlers from the imperial city had made homes to stay, so that, as Gildas says, it was to be viewed not as a British but as a Roman island.

"Britain," says Sharon Turner, "was not now in the state in which the Romans had found it. Its towns were no longer barricaded forests, nor its houses wood cabins covered with straw, nor its inhabitants naked savages with painted bodies or clothed with skins. It had been, for above three centuries, the seat of Roman civilization and luxury. Roman emperors had been born and others had reigned in it. The natives had been ambitious to obtain and hence had not only built houses, temples, courts, and market-places in their towns, but had adorned them with porti-

coes, galleries, baths, and saloons, and with mosaic pavements, and emulated every Roman improvement. They had distinguished themselves as legal advocates and orators and for their study of the Roman poets. Their cities had been made images of Rome itself, and the natives had become Romans."¹

We can not doubt that the skill and experience of the Roman architects who traveled with the legions, or who came from Rome to Britain after its conquest, had been imparted to the native Britons and that the chain of connection between the Roman Colleges and the local Colleges of Artificers in the island was well established. Many inscriptions and the remains of Roman buildings, found everywhere in modern England, furnish ample evidence of these truths.

Dorchester, which was the Roman Durnovaria, has besides the remains of the old Roman ruins and several camps, those of what was probably an amphitheater, attesting its former importance and the labors of the Roman builders.

Dover, the ancient Dubris, has even now an octagon tower attached to a church, and which is almost wholly built of Roman bricks. This building is supposed to have been a light-house in the time of the Romans.

London, or Londinium, was a very old city, and was the capital of ancient Britain as it now is of modern England. Though not honored by the Romans with the rights of a municipality, it was always, as Tacitus says, from the abundance of its trade, a place of great importance. The remains of Roman monuments which have been found in London show that it contained many splendid buildings. When the foundations of an old wall which bordered the river were laid open, some years ago, it was found to be made up of materials that had been previously used in the construction of ancient buildings.

"The stones of which this wall was constructed," says Charles Roach Smith,² "were portions of columns, friezes, cornices, and also foundation-stones. From their magnitude, character, and number, they gave an important and interesting insight into the obscure history of Roman London, in showing the architectural changes that had taken place in it."

¹ "History of the Anglo-Saxons," vol. i, p. 136.

² Dr. William Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography."

Architectural fragments, and the remains of tessellated pavements in great number have been discovered, which attest the magnificence of the Roman city, and traces of temples have also been found.

The claim has been made that London was the station of a regiment of native Britons, which was contrary to the usage of the Roman Emperors, who never stationed auxiliaries in their native countries. But we know that a colony of veterans had been established at Camalodunum or Malden not far off, and there are inscriptions proving the presence, at various times, of the soldiers of the second, sixth, and twentieth legions in the city. It is easy, therefore, to trace, as we must, the construction of these magnificent works to Roman architects, supplied by the legions or the colonies.

Eboracum, or York, is familiar to the Masonic student from the important part that it plays in the traditional history of English Freemasonry. York was a town of much importance in the times of the Romans, and seems to have been a favorite place of residence. At York was the permanent station of the sixth or victorious legion. The Emperors Severus and Constantius died there, and here is said to have been the birthplace of Constantine the Great.

Among the memorials of the Roman control which have been found at York are many remains of temples, baths, altars, votive tablets, and even private residences. Of the many inscriptions that have been preserved, one dedicated to the Egyptian god Serapis, and a tablet or slab containing the carved figure of a man wearing a cap and chlamys or short mantle, who is stabbing a bull, indicate the introduction by the Romans of the worship of a foreign god as well as the practice of the mystical rites of Mithras.

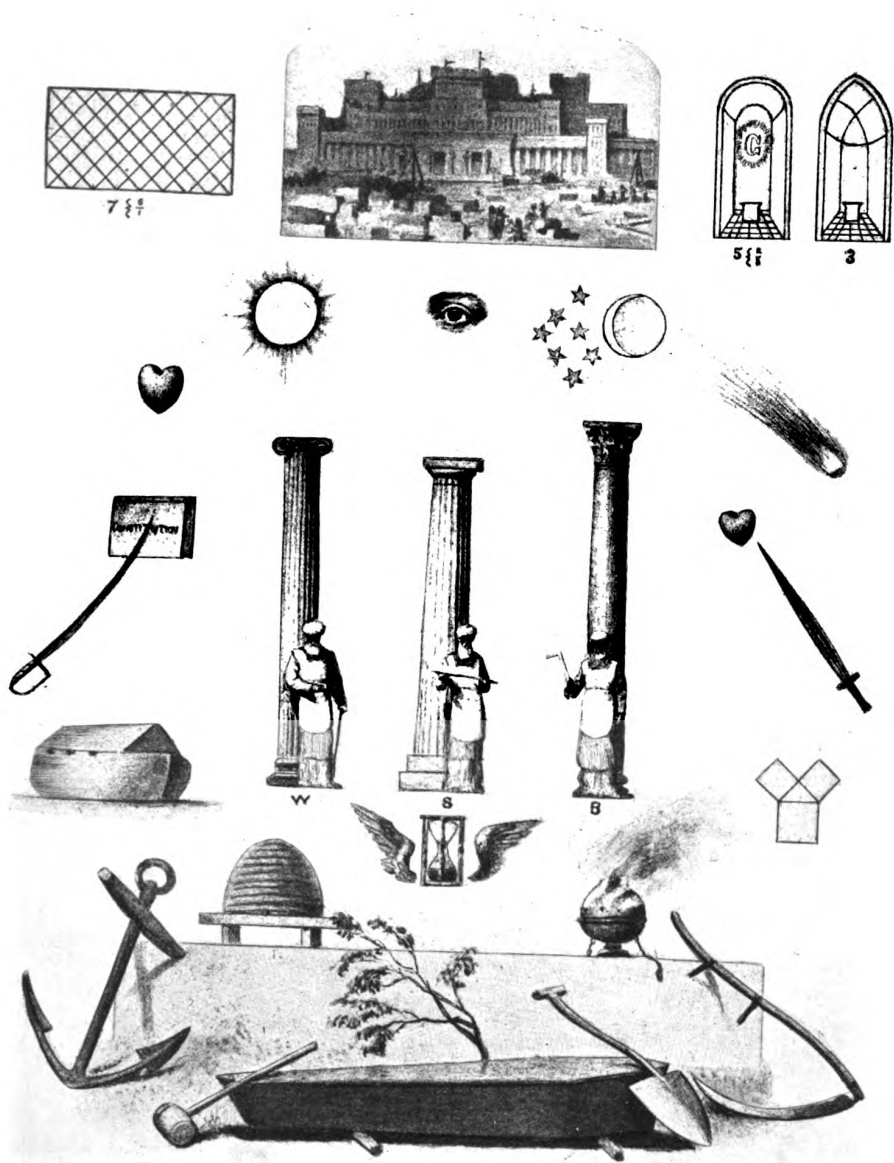
At the beginning of the 5th century, the Roman Empire being at the time seemingly in danger of downfall, the legions and the Roman authority, which had ruled and protected Britain for so long a period, were withdrawn. The people were left to defend themselves from the inroads of the Danes and other savage attacks from the opposite shores of the Continent. Many changes took place in the laws, the language, and the habits of the island. In time, after many wars, Britain became Anglo-Saxon England.

But, as on the retirement of the Romans, many voluntarily remained, because they had become used to the country and, in many cases, had been connected by marriage with the natives, Britain did not altogether lose the influence of the seed that had been sown. Especially in the art of building, although there was a deterioration, all the effects of the Roman civilization were not lost. We believe it will not be difficult to trace the development of the system of trade gilds which afterwards existed among the Anglo-Saxons and the English to the suggestions of the similar gilds of the Roman Colleges. The consideration of this particular branch of our subject will be taken up in a chapter devoted to the matter.

What we have attempted has been to show that the Roman Colleges, sending their architects to the colonies and cities established in the conquered provinces of the Roman Empire, had secured, in an unbroken succession, not only the principles of architecture but the co-operative and well-regulated system of work which, beginning at the earliest period of Roman history in the Colleges of Artificers was to be carried throughout its acquired control by its legions and its colonists, and finally to be developed in a modern form in the corporations of Operative Freemasons of the Middle Ages, and finally in the Lodges of Speculative Freemasons of the present day.

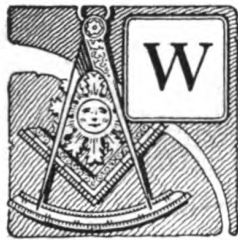
So far the first and second links of this chain of connection have been shown. We here close the history with the fall of the Roman government over the provinces at the beginning of the 5th century. As we proceed in these investigations our inquiries must bring us successively to the condition of architecture and its gradual growth into new systems and various styles in all the countries which were once under the Roman control.

We shall, we believe, find the principles of architecture changing from the influences of various causes exerted at these several times. Architecture will be constantly changing its features. The Roman, the Byzantine, the Gothic, and other styles will succeed and displace each other, but the system of co-operative or gild labor, which is the true connecting chain between the ancient and the modern methods of building, will always prevail and show, in every successive age, the unweakened influence of the old Roman gild or college.



CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

EARLY FREEMASONRY IN FRANCE



WITH the condition of Freemasonry in Gaul, a province that afterwards became France, following upon the decay of the Roman Empire, and on up to the Middle Ages, we are by no means as familiar as we are with its circumstances during the same period in Germany and in Britain. French Masonic writers have been too speculative in their views. They have given too free a rein to their imaginations, to permit us to attach great value to the authenticity of what they present as historical statements.

This is a fault, it is but fair to say, that has been shared by the English writers of what has been called Masonic history. Clavel and Thory are hardly to be considered more reliable as historians than Anderson and Oliver. In the works of each of these noted writers we find statements which are improbable, and which, although offered as historical facts, are wholly unsupported by any authentic authority.

But since their time in England a new school of Masonic history has sprung up, one that is rapidly clearing away the cobwebs of absurdity and inconsistency, of doubt and error which had been woven around the pure form of history by the old writers of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century.

In France, no such school has been popular. That country has lacked Hughans, Woodfords, and Lyons to bring to light from their hiding places on the shelves of national or private libraries, the old charters and documents which might throw some light on the real condition of the Masonic fraternities left behind in Gaul on the retreat of the Roman legions, and which were afterwards developed, by a gradual but steady growth, into the building corporations of the Middle Ages.

If the scholars of France supply us with too little valuable assistance in our inquiries on this subject, we shall look in vain for aid from English or German writers.

These have, in general, thought it a task sufficiently difficult in seeking to clear up the Masonic history of their own countries, and have not, therefore, found either time or inclination to labor, to any great extent, in other fields.

Even Findel, who is somewhat exhaustive in his account of the early and mediæval Freemasonry of Britain, and more especially of Germany, passes over that of France without notice. Indeed, he begins his chapter on French Freemasonry with the year 1725 as his starting-point. Thus he entirely overlooks all the events that preceded the organization of the modern Lodges in Paris after the Revival, as it is called, which took place in London in the year 1717. Hence his history is not really that of Freemasonry in France, but only that of the French Grand Lodge.

From Kloss, another German writer of note, we get no better information. He wrote, in two volumes, a *History of Freemasonry in France, Drawn from Authentic Documents*, but his theory is that the institution was introduced into France from England. He goes, like Findel, no farther back than to the organization of a French Lodge, in 1725, under the wing of the Grand Lodge of England.

It will be seen, when we come to consider the origin of the Grand Lodge of Speculative Freemasons in France, that there is some question of the correctness of this date, for the researches of Bro. Hughan have led to doubt whether there was a legal Lodge in France, deriving its authority from the English Grand Lodge before the year 1732. This, however, is not related to the present inquiry.

It is altogether in vain that we look in the pages of French Masonic writers, such as Thory and Clavel, for any documentary history of French Freemasonry before the beginning of the 18th century.

Thory, in his *Acta Latomorum*, commences his annals, so far as they relate to France, with the year 1725, and the founding of a Lodge in Paris by the Earl of Derwentwater. Not a word does he say of the condition of the association, either as Operative or Speculative, previous to that date.

Clavel, in his *Histoire Pittoresque*, gives a very loose and indefinite account of the origin of Freemasonry in France. He traces it, and in so far he is correct, to the Roman Colleges of Artificers through the architects of Lombardy, and passes very rapidly on to the connection of the French Operative Freemasons with the building corporations of Germany and the Grand Lodge of Strasburg. But he does not attempt to show how that connection was effected.

There is no objection to Clavel's theory. His principal fault, as a historian, lies in his very general outlook and his limited details. Taking as his point of departure the Roman Colleges, he leaps almost at one jump from them to the mediæval corporations. He devotes no attention to the period which immediately followed the fall of the Empire, nor to the influences exerted on, or the methods pursued by, the Roman and Gallic Freemasons who were left in Gaul on the leaving of the legions, and which led to the gradual development of the gilds, fraternities, or lodges which sprang up in time as the successors of the Roman Colleges.

Another failing of Clavel as a historian, and one which produces the most unsatisfactory results upon the minds of his readers, is that he produces no documents, does not even refer to any, and he gives no authority to support any of the statements that he makes so confidently.

Even in a writer of acknowledged care and attention to the trustworthy quality and genuineness of the facts that he records, such a method of treating a historical account would be objectionable. But what little claim Clavel's unsupported assertions have to our respect, and how far they are from necessarily demanding our belief, may be learned from the fact that he cites as an undoubted instance of the existence of a Masonic Lodge in the year 1512, what is now known to have been merely a convivial society of literary men who met at Florence in that year under the title of the "Society of the Trowel."

This society counted some of the most distinguished inhabitants of Florence among its members. Its symbols were the trowel, the square, the hammer, and the level, and its patron saint was St. Andrew. Vasari describes it as a festive association of Florentine artists, who met annually to dine together. He says the origin of its existence and its title was due to the merely

accidental circumstance that certain painters and sculptors, dining together in a garden, observed in the vicinity of their table a mass of mortar in which a trowel was sticking. Some rough practical jokes passed thereupon, such as casting portions of the mortar on each other and then those present called for the trowel to scrape it off. They then resolved to dine together annually, and as a memorial of the comical event that had led to their organization as a dinner-club they called themselves the *Societa della Cuechiara*, or the *Society of the Trowel*.

The mention of a tool of Operative Freemasonry in the title of the society, led Clavel, as it has done Righellini, Lenning, and some others, to believe that it was a Masonic organization. But a reference to the authority of Vasari, in his *Lives of the Painters*, would have shown that the apparently professional title was actually selected by a mere accident and in reference to a joking affair which suggested the name.

There is hardly any necessity to refer to the writings of the Chevalier Ramsay, as throwing any light on the early history of Freemasonry in France. The theory credited by many to Ramsay is that Freemasonry started among the Crusaders and was brought into France by the Templars, who carried it with them on their return from Palestine. This theory is now generally, perhaps we should say universally, admitted to be unsound. It comprises a history, or the fiction of a history, not founded on facts nor supported by any documentary evidence, but one that was simply invented to sustain a preconceived theory. The theory was first invented and then the history was written. Hence it has been rejected by all students and has fallen into utter inaction together with the system of Strict Observance that was founded on it. In this work of ours, which seeks to trace Freemasonry back to the Colleges of Artificers of Rome, it can of course have no place.

Rebold is a pleasing exception to the rest of his countrymen who have treated or attempted to treat this subject, though it is to be regretted that he has not thought proper to back up his statements by a reference to authorities, or by what would have been most valuable, the mention in detail of any old records or constitutions. On the whole, however, he is more satisfactory than any other writer of early French Masonic history, and gives

a fuller account of the institution as it existed when Gaul left the control of Rome.

His history,¹ summed up briefly, is to the following effect: He says that Freemasonry was introduced into Gaul by the Roman fraternities of builders, one of which was attached to each legion of the army. He describes the troubles to which these architects were subjected during the repeated conflicts of the Romans with the savage nations, whose defeats or successes were followed by the destruction or the renewal of the labors of the Freemasons.

At length, in the year 426, the victorious army of Clovis, King of the Franks, put an end to the Roman control, and the armies of the Empire left, forever, the soil of Gaul.

But the fraternities of builders, which had come into the country with the Roman legions, remained there after the leaving of the soldiers. They, however, underwent material alterations in their organization, and developed a new system. This, Rebold thinks, became the basis of that Freemasonry which existed for a long time afterwards in France.

Moller, in his *Memorials of German Gothic Architecture*,² when referring to the fact that the Roman architecture of the 5th and 6th centuries prevailed at a much later period in Italy, Spain, Gaul, and Britain, explains the circumstance as follows:

"The conquerors did not wipe out the old inhabitants, but left to them exclusively, at least in the first periods of their invasion, the practice of those arts of peace, upon which the rude warrior looked with contempt. And even at a later time, the intimate connection with Rome, which the clergy, then the only civilized part of the nation, entertained, and the unceasing and generally continued use of the Latin language in the divine service, gave considerable influence to Roman arts and sciences. This must have been so much more the case, from the constant obligation of all freemen to devote themselves to war; whereby the practice of the arts was left almost exclusively to the clergy."

The corporations of builders which had been attached, some to the legions and some to the governors of the provinces, under whose orders they had constructed many great edifices, then

¹ "Histoire des Trois Grandes Loges de Franc-Maçons en France," Paris, 1864.

² Translation by W. H. Leeds, London, 1836, p. 17.

began to admit into their bosom a large number of native Gauls who had been converted to Christianity.

A most important change, however, to which they were compelled to submit, was this, that being originally a general association of artisans, whose central sect and school of instruction was at Rome, they were obliged to abandon this relation on the retreat of the Roman armies from Gaul, and thus cut off all political connection between the province and the Imperial government.

The builders, as well as the other craftsmen, then divided themselves into a variety of fraternities, each being occupied with the practice of a different art or trade.

It is here that Rebold should have cited some authority for his statement of a fact that is contrary to what has always been supposed to be the true character of the Roman Colleges. The division into different trades, which he supposes to have been a forced necessity in Gaul, was in existence if history be correct, from the first organization of the Colleges by Numa, when they were ten in number, which was, later on, increased to a large extent under the Empire.

These brotherhoods of different trades, he says, later gave rise to the corporations or guilds of the Middle Ages.

Of these fraternities, that of the builders, or Freemasons, being the most important, and the one most needed in the countries where they were left after the departure of the Romans, especially in Gaul and Britain, was alone enabled to keep up the old organization and the ancient privileges they had possessed under the control of the Romans.

But amid the continued attacks of savage foes, and the wars and political disturbances that followed, the fraternities of builders were at last everywhere without occupation. The arts and architecture among them, paralyzed by international contests, found a refuge only in the houses of the church, the monasteries, where they were successfully practiced and encouraged by the monks and the ecclesiastics who had been admitted into the fraternity of Freemasons.

Among the most celebrated architects of France who were the products of those monastic schools of architecture, Rebold mentions St. Eloi, Bishop of Noyon; St. Fereol, of Limoges;

Dalmac, of Rodez; and Agniola, of Chalons, all of whom flourished in the 7th century. But he says that there were among the laymen outside this class of church officials, also, architects not less noted, under whose direction many edifices were built in Gaul and in Britain at a later period.

Most famous of those whom Rebold has described as architects and as the disciples of the monastic schools of architecture was St. Eloi, or Eligius. But St. Eloi was not an architect, but a goldsmith, having regularly served an apprenticeship to that trade, even after his appointment by Clothaire II. to the position of treasurer, or Master of the Mint. Later, when fifty-two years of age, he was raised to the bishopric of Noyon, for which he was obliged to prepare himself by two years of study and admission to certain orders of the church.

As a church leader and high official he patronized, as many others had done, the architects by the erection of churches and monasteries. But his connection with Operative Freemasonry is rather through the gild organizations than through any close connection with the craft of building. He organized the monks of his abbey, according to St. Croix,¹ into a gild or school of smiths, for whom he drew up a code of regulations.

According to the same authority the statutes for the government of the craftsmen of Paris, prepared in the 14th century by Stephen Boileau, were but a transcript of those of St. Eloi.

Whittington says that St. Eloi belonged, properly, to the class of professional artists who were richly favored and held in high esteem by him.²

The writer of his life in the *Spicilegium* describes him as "a very skillful goldsmith and most learned in all constructive arts."³

It is very evident that Rebold has so far given us the early history of architecture in France rather than that of Freemasonry. In this respect, his work follows, in its spirit, that of Dr. Anderson in the first and especially in the second edition of the *Book of Constitutions*. To the student of Masonic his-

¹ "Les Arts au Moyen Age et la Renaissance."

² "Ecclesiastical Antiquities of France," p. 27.

³ Aurifex partissimus atque in omni arte fabricandi doctissimus. "Spicilegium," t. v., in Vita S. Eligii.

tory such annals are of value only because of the traditional relations that exist between the Operative and the Speculative systems.

Well authenticated history leaves us no room to doubt that the Romans brought architecture into France, or, to speak more correctly, into Gaul at a very early period. Many remarkable ruins are still remaining in the older cities as Arles, Avignon, Nîmes, and other ancient places, which are the fragments from the labors of builders and architects under the Roman control. In fact, when the less civilized nations began their trips into Gaul, the land was covered with the monuments of Roman art. Many of these were destroyed, but there still remained, in the 6th century, a great number of public and private edifices which had been spared. In fact, there is at Nîmes a temple and an aqueduct still remaining in a state of excellent preservation. The former is now used as a museum of antiquities, and the latter, known as the *Pont du Gard*, is solid and strong, and is admitted by scholars to be the noblest Roman monument in France.

The people, during a long period of subjection to the Roman rule, was traditionally educated in the architectural taste and spirit of Rome. With the revival of the art of building construction in the 6th, 7th and 8th centuries, the Christian churches became but the reflection of the Pagan basilica, the hall of justice, and the palaces of kings and the castles of nobles were but copies enlarged of the Romano-Gallic villas or country houses.

French Masonic writers have with a great claim to plausibility assumed that the Freemasons of France were a continuation in regular and unbroken descent of the Roman Colleges of Artificers. This view has been strengthened by another historical fact, that admits of no doubt, that Charlemagne, whose name and that of his grandfather Charles Martel are frequently referred to as patrons of Freemasonry in the old English records, was noted for his zeal in the erection of churches and palaces and brought many architects from Byzantium into France, founding there, or rather transplanting there, the Byzantine Order of Architecture which, however, afterward gave place to the Gothic, or that Order of which the mediæval Freemasons were, it is generally agreed, the inventors.

Rebold,¹ as a historian, occupies a middle term between the doubting and image-breaking modern school and the easy belief of the early Masonic annalists. He says that after the final giving up of Gaul by the Romans, about the end of the 5th century, though many of the Colleges of Artificers which had been established under the Roman control remained in Gaul, yet their organization underwent important changes. In the first place, the general association of the various artisans who were necessary to the pursuit of architecture, religious, naval, and hydraulic, or the building of temples, of ships, and of bridges and aqueducts, being no longer able to maintain itself in a country abandoned by the Romans, and having lost its center of action and its principal school at Rome, no longer practiced architecture as a profession in common and under one head, but was divided into various associations, each of which occupied itself thereafter with but the study and practice of a single art or trade.

It is in this way that he accounts for the rise of the corporations which flourished later on in the Middle Ages, and which were in the transition period between the ancient Colleges and the modern Lodges.

These various fraternities sprang out of the general association of artisans existing under the Roman Empire, the corporation of builders or masons being the most important fraction. The latter preserved, says Rebold, their ancient organization and their ancient privileges, because the countries where they resided after the leaving of the Romans, being greatly in need of their services as builders, freely accorded to them the privileges they had possessed under the Romans.

The Teutonic invaders of Gaul who drove out the Romans, though barbarians, were wise enough not to destroy the old monuments of Roman art and civilization, but to make use of and profit by them.

But in the same century the cathedral erected by Naumatus, Bishop of Auvergne, surpassed that of Perpeticus. Gregory of Tours, who was a native of Auvergne, describes the edifice with much eloquence of phrase in his *Historia Francorum*, and states the fact, interesting as showing the connection of high-placed

¹ "Histoire des Trois Grandes Loges," p. 24.

churchmen with Operative Freemasonry, that he built it according to his own designs — *ecclesiam suo studio fabricavit*.

The inroads of the Franks into Gaul in the 6th century caused at first, amid the clash of war, while the arts of peace were silent, the injury and downfall of many religious edifices. But the conversion and baptism of Clovis placed Christianity on a firm foundation and caused the preservation of the remaining monuments of the ancient civilization.

The Franks, a bold, enterprising and warlike offshoot from the great Teutonic race, and who were the real founders of the kingdom which afterwards became modern France, were notwithstanding their fights among themselves and their conflicts with neighboring people, inclined to practice the arts of peace. They occupied, says Dean Church, a land of great natural wealth and great geographical advantages, which had been prepared for them by Latin culture; they inherited great cities which they had not built, and fields and vineyards which they had not planted; and they had the wisdom not to destroy but to use their conquest.¹

The Franks were indeed friendly to Roman culture; preserved many of the Roman laws and customs, and accepted for their own use a modified form of the Latin language.

Architecture, which had dragged along during the stormy period when the Romans were unsuccessfully striving to defend their acquired provinces and the very existence of the Empire itself from the wild hosts of northern invaders, began, in the 5th and 6th centuries, to revive. The fraternities of builders and the art of architecture to some extent, says Rebold,² resumed activity.

The fact, already mentioned elsewhere, that the art of building, especially of religious edifices, had passed into the hands of the monks, is found to prevail also in the history of the art in France at this early period. The remarks of Whittington on this subject in his *Historical Survey* are well worthy of quotation:

"The ancient writers often mention instances of an abbot giving a plan which his convent assisted in carrying into execution. The edifices of religion owed their first existence to the zeal of the clergy. The more enlightened prelates invented or

¹ "The Beginning of the Middle Ages," by R. W. Church, Dean of St. Paul's, p. 85.

² "Histoire des Trois Grandes Loges," p. 25.

procured the plans and carried them into execution. But although from record as well as from probability we may conclude that the arts in this age were principally cultivated by the clergy, it is no less certain that there were persons who practiced them as a profession. What that powerful Order found necessary to promote by their own exertions, they did not fail to patronize in others, and to the common masons and carpenters who might be found in the different cities of France persons of superior skill and intelligence were added who were invited from distant quarters by the enterprising liberality of the bishops. The superstition of the times and the authority of the Church secured them employment and protection; they gradually increased in numbers and improved in science, till at length they produced the most able artificers from among themselves. France, in fact, at this time was not without professional artists, but they seem to have been neither numerous nor eminent, and the clergy were frequently left to their own exertions and resources. Gregory of Tours (who flourished in the 6th century) speaks of several of his predecessors as if they had superintended the building of their churches, particularly Ommatius, who rebuilt the Church of Sts. Gervase and Protasius and began that of St. Mary; and he expressly affirms that Leo, Bishop of Tours, was an artist of great skill, particularly in works of carpentry, and that he built towers which he covered with gilt bronze some of which had lasted till his time. One general spirit indeed seems to have prevailed among the French bishops of the 6th century to establish new churches and to improve the towns of their dioceses."¹

The progress of architecture in the 7th century under St. Eloi, or Eligius, and during the reign of Clothaire II., has already been mentioned. In the 7th and 8th centuries the mode of building and the artistic taste of the builders remained about the same as in the 6th, but the features were somewhat enlarged and enriched, and towers and belfries became common.

In the 9th century, architecture and Operative Freemasonry received new strength under the fostering care of Charlemagne. The buildings erected in his reign exceeded in taste and extent the works of preceding kings. There was a better contact with the East and with Byzantine artists. Italian archi-

¹ "Historical Survey of the Ecclesiastical Antiquities of France," p. 22.

tects were brought from Lombardy, and the monuments of ancient Rome were imitated.¹

The nameless Monk of the Monastery of St. Gall, who wrote the *Gestes de Charlemagne*, in describing the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle, which was erected by Charlemagne, says that it surpassed in splendor the works of the ancient Romans, and that for its construction he called together masters and workmen from all parts of the Continent.²

Rebold thinks that the fact that Charlemagne had sought for builders in other countries is an evidence that they had become fewer in France. This is scarcely a sound belief. The King might very properly avail himself of the skill and experience of foreign artists, without necessarily indicating by the invitation and use of them that there were none in his own country. The wrecks of the ancient Roman Colleges were still remaining in Lombardy, and it has already been shown that there was a flourishing school of architecture at Como.

Indeed it cannot be doubted that the intercourse established by Charlemagne, between France and other countries of Europe, was very favorable to the progress and improvement of the arts. The number of artists was greatly increased, and they were supplied with better models for imitation.

"Charlemagne," says Simonde de Sismondi, "was one of the greatest characters of the Middle Ages. Contrasted with his contemporaries, he possessed all the advantages of a man who was a stranger to his age. As we have seen before his time, extraordinary men who have subjugated a civilized people by the energy of a character half savage, so in him we see a man who, being in advance of the civilization of his times, has subdued barbarians by the force of his intellect and by his knowledge. He combined the qualities of a legislator with those of a warrior, and united the genius which creates with the vigilant prudence that preserves and maintains an empire. He drew together in one chain barbarians and Romans, the conquerors and the conquered, and united them in a new empire. He laid the foundations of a new order for Europe, an order which essentially

¹ "Historical Survey of the Ecclesiastical Antiquities of France," p. 30.

² "Basilica, antiquis Romanorum operibus præstantiore, brevi ab eo fabricata, ex omnibus cismarinis regionibus, magistris et opificibus advocatis." Legend, lib. I, chap. xxxii.

reposed on the virtues of a hero, and on the respect and admiration which he inspired.”¹

Such has been at all times the concurrent opinion of all historians with the exception of Voltaire, and perhaps a few others. And even they, while charging him with unproved faults and even crimes, admit the greatness of his enterprises and the splendor of his reign. It is therefore singular that in the traditions of the early Freemasons he has not been permitted to occupy a place unless as has been pointed out his name has been pushed aside by a substitute.

In the *Legend of the Craft*, found in the Old Records of the English Masons, the introduction of Freemasonry into France is said to be due to a certain Greek artist who had been at the building of the Temple of Solomon, and came into France in the time of Charles Martel, who patronized the Craft, made masons, and gave them charges.

We may well note here an error as to the meaning of the name of this celebrated Mayor of the Palace, who, without assuming the title, exercised all the functions of a king. It has been the universal custom to derive the word *Martel* from the French *Marteau*, which signifies a *hammer*, and it has been supposed that he obtained the name from the fact that he crushed the barbarians with whom he fought, as with a hammer as potent as that of Thor. And so it has been very usual with English writers to Anglicize his name as Charles the “Hammer.”

But M. de Feller (*Biographie Universelle*), a very competent authority on French etymology, has shown that *Martel* is only another name for *Martin*; that Martin was a familiar name in the family of Pepin, of which Charles Martel was a member, and that it was adopted in the spirit of devotion to St. Martin, who was then the favorite saint of the Franks.

We must, however, in fairness admit that M. Michelet (*Histoire de France*, lib. ii, p. 112), an authority as good, at least, as M. de Feller, recognizes the current derivation from *Marteau*, which he thinks referred to the hammer of the Scandinavian god Thor, and he is therefore of the opinion that Charles was not a Christian.

The gross mistake of making a workman at Solomon's Temple a visitor at the Court of Charles Martel, at once exposes the

¹ “Histoire des Republiques Italiennes du Moyen Age,” tome I, chap. i, p. 10. Paris, 1826-33.

great lack of information and the liability to error of the original composer of the Legend. It is not, therefore, at all improbable that he confounded Charles Martel with his grandson Charlemagne.

It is very evident that the spirit of the Legend does not apply to Martel, who, during his official life under two feeble kings, was fully occupied in wars with rebel subjects, with the Saxons on the north and the Saracens from Spain in the south, and who had neither time nor taste to devote to the arts of peace. The monks, who were then the principal builders, were not his favorites, and St. Boniface has not hesitated to call him "the destroyer of monasteries." It is hardly to be doubted that he destroyed more than he built.

Charlemagne, on the contrary, was, as we have seen, the patron of the arts of civilization. He might, with but a little stretch of imagination, be called the founder of Operative Freemasonry in France. His contact with Byzantium and the East gives color also to the legend that he was visited by a Greek architect, which is simply a symbolic expression of the idea that Byzantine architecture and Greek art and culture were beginning to be introduced into France and the West during the period when Charlemagne reigned.

We may, therefore, very safely correct the English *Legend of the Craft* by substituting the name of Charlemagne for that of Charles Martel.

Louis the Feeble, the son and successor of Charlemagne, though, as the nickname bestowed upon him means, a prince of no force of character, yet favored architecture, and in his reign many religious structures were built, under the superintendence of his architect. The name of this artist was Rimalde. We know scarcely more of him than the fact that he was the architect of Louis. Whittington thinks it probable that he was not a churchman official of high priestly position, since it is clear that he practiced his art as a profession, and architects doing no other work were at that time becoming common.

The universal belief that prevailed in the 10th century, in the near-at-hand destruction of the world, the coming of the Millennium, and the Day of Judgment, had naturally the effect of paralyzing all industrial arts, and architecture made little or no progress.

During the 11th century there was a revival. The records of that period contain the names of many distinguished architects, who were not monks but professional men of business. Freemasonry had for some time been passing away out of the hands of the officials of the Church into those of the laymen and the gilds.

The gilds, or trade corporations, in France¹ began about this time to take an active existence and to exert a powerful interest on the progress of the arts. The consideration of their history is well worthy of a distinct chapter. But our attention must now be turned to the early history of Freemasonry in other countries.

¹ A study of the gilds of the Middle Ages has been written by Georges Renard and contains references to French conditions as well as other countries though the latter get but limited attention. However, as a general introduction to the "Gilds of the Middle Ages" the book is excellent and shows most interestingly many facts of decided importance to Freemasons. Note this:

"Freemasonry, as far as it is possible to pierce the mists which envelop its early history, was essentially a federation of trades. It took its birth from the bands of workmen who had their reason for existence in the construction of those vast cathedrals whose harmonious proportions are certainly the most perfect legacy left to us by the Middle Ages. The aim of the association was to keep in order the crowds of half-tramp laborers, who for more than fifty years or so would establish themselves in a town; to transmit from one generation to the next the secrets of the Craft; to act as arbitrator in the quarrels which might arise among this restless population. Born in the shadow of the sanctuary, it was naturally mystic and religious in character; it claimed to go back to the Templars, or even to the builders of Solomon's Temple; it was the child of an age which delighted in mystery and occult knowledge, and it imposed on its members a complicated initiation, formidable tests, signs of recognition, and passwords. Created for men who sometimes transferred their labor and their plans from one end of Europe to the other, it scattered its lodges over different lands; it was international, and in this differed profoundly from the gilds. But with this exception, it took its place within the existing order of things, accepted the hierarchy of the gild system, and had its three degrees, entered apprentice, journeyman, and master."

The first part of Renard's book has been translated into English by Dorothy Terry and is published by Bell and Sons, London, 1919.

CHAPTER FIFTY

EARLY FREEMASONRY IN BRITAIN



FROM the time of the conquest of Britain by Claudius to the final departure from the island by the Romans in the beginning of the 5th century, there was a period of about three hundred and fifty years. During this long occupation the Romans had held, if not undisputed, at least governing sway over the greater part of the island. Roman legions had been permanently stationed in several towns; Roman colonies had been established; Roman citizens had made homes and settled in greater numbers; Roman arts and civilization had been introduced; and, as we have already shown in a preceding chapter, the native inhabitants had become almost Romanized in their manners and customs.

We cannot suppose that the control for so long a continuity of years of a powerful empire, noted for its cultivation of the arts, should not have been productive of the effects that must always result from the intimate and extended mixture of a refined with an uncivilized people.

Among the arts introduced by the Romans, there is none that could have so much attracted the attention of the natives as that of architecture. Of all the methods of human industry that are intended to supply the wants or promote the comforts of life, the art of building is placed in the most prominent position. All the arts, says Cicero, which relate to humanity have a certain bond of union and a kind of kinship to each other. But it must be acknowledged that the art which proposes to secure to man a protection from the elements and a shelter from the severity of the seasons must hold the highest place in the family scale. That is the first art which man favors in his progress from savagery to civilization. It is the most salient mark of that progress. No

sooner did the Troglodytes, these very early people of Western Europe, come from their cave dwellings than they began to erect, however rudely, huts for their homes.

So when a nation or a tribe begins to make an advancement in civilization, the first step is to improve its mode of dwelling. When conquest brings a superior race to an ignorant and uncultured people, the industrial arts of the former speedily diffuse among the latter, and architecture, as the most striking and the most useful, more quickly attracts the attention and is more readily imitated than any other.

When the Romans first invaded Britain they found the country inhabited by various tribes deriving their origin from different wandering stocks, and therefore somewhat unlike in their conditions and their habits. The Belgians, for instance, had passed over from Gaul and occupied, by the right of conquest, the coast bordering on the British Channel. They were farmers, and are described by Cæsar as being more advanced in the arts of civilized life than the tribes in the interior who were shepherds, living on milk and flesh and were clothed in skins.

Mela Pomponius, the Roman geographer, who wrote about the same time, describes the Britons as being in general uncivilized and much behind the Continental nations in their social culture. Fields and cattle were their only wealth.

Wright, in an *Essay on the Ethnology of South Britain at the Extinction of the Roman Government*, says that "We may form a notion best and most correctly of the mode of life and of the degree of civilization of the ancient Britons, by comparing them with what we know of those of the wild Irish and of the Celtic highlanders of Scotland in the Middle Ages. Living in septs or clans, each collected round a petty chieftain, who had his residence or place of refuge in the least accessible part of his little territory; they had no towns, properly so-called, and no tie of union except the temporary one of war or a nominal dependence on some powerful chieftain who had induced, by some means, a certain number of the smaller clans to acknowledge his sovereignty." ¹

Their houses, says Sharon Turner, were chiefly formed of reeds or wood, and were usually seated in the midst of woods, a

¹ Thomas Wright, "Essays on Archæological Subjects," vol. i, p. 68.

space being cleared on which they built their huts and herded their cattle.¹

The improved condition of Britain, because of their intercourse with their more civilized conquerors, is thus described by Wright:²

"Under the Romans, on the contrary, Britain consisted politically of a number of cities or towns, each possessing its own independent municipal government, republican in form and principle within themselves, but united under the Empire through the fiscal government of the province to which they were tributary. Each of these cities inhabited by foreigners to the island, was expected to defend itself if attacked, while three legions and numerous bodies of auxiliaries protected the province from hostilities from without and held it internally in obedience to the Imperial government. The country was unimportant and the towns were everything."

The many inscriptions found in England during recent times prove another fact, namely, that the legionary troops which were sent from Rome to Britain did not pay merely slight or short-lived visits, from which no important influence could have been derived, but that they remained in the same locality during the whole occupation of the country by the Romans. They actually formed military colonies, making homes in the towns in which they lived, and insensibly imparting the use of the Latin language and the adoption of Roman manners to the people. So much, in fact, did they become identified with the native inhabitants, that they often made common cause with them in uprisings against the Imperial government.

The result of this constant mingling must have been just that which might anywhere, under such circumstances, have been expected. The architects who accompanied the legions in their visits to Britain and who remained with them during its occupation did not confine their labors to the construction of military works, such as the erection of defensive walls and fortresses. They engaged, during the period of peace which had been secured by the presence of strong bodies of troops, in the quiet avocations of their art. They organized their Colleges of

¹ "History of the Anglo-Saxons," vol. i, p. 64.

² "Essays on Archaeological Subjects," vol. i, p. 69.

Artificers, which, considering the works in which they were engaged, might correctly be named as Colleges of Freemasons; they began the building of temples and other public edifices; they took to their assistance the more intelligent natives, and introduced their Roman architecture by methods imitating those of the Colleges at home.

The rude huts of the native Britons were replaced by more comfortable houses. The art of building, under the guidance of the Roman Freemasons, assumed a new form and was prosecuted by new methods, which thus introduced the character and customs of the Roman Colleges into the island. Thus, by the example of associated workmen, continued the chain of connection which was to be more fully extended in Anglo-Saxon times by the establishment of building gilds.

Tacitus has shown us, in his *Life of Agricola*, how and at what an early period this system began of Romanizing Britain. In the last quarter of the 1st Christian century, Agricola arrived in Britain having been appointed governor of the province. The island, hardly yet recovered from the recent uprising of Queen Boadicea, was still in a rebel condition. The first efforts of Agricola were of course directed to the restoration of peace and order, and to the correction of civil and political abuses. His next business was to introduce a system of regulations whose tendency should be to civilize the natives. He encouraged them, therefore, says Tacitus,¹ by his appeals and aided them by public assistance to build temples, courts of justice, and inviting dwellings. He praised those who were cheerful in their obedience; he reproached those who were slow and uncomplying, and thus excited a spirit of enterprise. He established a plan of education and caused the sons of the chiefs to be instructed in learning and to favor the Latin language. The Roman dress was adopted by many, and the Britons, allured by the self-gratifying example of their conquerors, began to erect baths and porticoes and to indulge in lavish banquets.

To do all this was not within the narrow scope of native skill. In the erection of these improved edifices the Britons, being only partly reclaimed from their early barbarity, must have asked and received the advice and assistance of the Roman architects.

¹ "Vita Agricolaë," cap. xxi.

The co-operative and gild-like methods of building practiced by these, as well as their skill in architecture, were thus taught to the Britons. What had been wisely begun by Agricola was as wisely imitated by his successors in the provincial government. The Roman Collegiate system was completely established in the island long before the end of the Roman control and the fall of the Roman Empire.

That the builders or Freemasons introduced into Rome, or educated there by their Roman Masters, had increased to a very great number is evident from a remark of Eumenius in his *Panegyric of the Emperor Maximian*. He describes the ancient Gallic city of Bibracte, afterward Augustodunum, but now the modern Autun, which abounds in the remains of Roman architecture, many of them in a good state of preservation. The repair of private houses and the construction of temples and other buildings with which Maximian had adorned the city, he credits to the force of architects the Emperor had brought from Britain, which province, he says, abounded with them. The number of these Roman architects in Britain was so great and their skill so noted, that, as we shall hereafter see, they were sent into many continental cities to construct buildings in the Roman method.

The remains of Roman buildings found at various times in England and a host of ancient inscriptions testify to the fact that the conquerors had brought their architectural art with them into Britain. But the mere existence of pieces of architecture would not alone serve to establish the connection of these Roman architects and their British disciples with the mediæval gilds. In this way we might, as Anderson has done, write a history of architecture, but would hardly be authorized to call it a history of Freemasonry. It is necessary to show that the Roman architects not only brought with them their skill in the art of building but also introduced the associated methods of organization practiced by the ancient Roman Colleges. Of this we have ample evidence.

The Rev. James Dallaway, in his *Collections for a Historical Account of Masters and Free Masons*, a part of his *Discourses upon Architecture in England*, says that the first notice that occurs of an associated body of Roman artificers who had established themselves in Britain is a votive inscription in which the College of Freemasons dedicate a temple to Neptune and Minerva, and to

the safety of the family of Claudius Cæsar. This was discovered at Chichester in the year 1725. The tablet is a slab of gray Sussex marble and was found by the workmen who were digging a cellar. They ignorantly or carelessly fractured it. Having been pieced together, the slab is now preserved at Goodwood, the seat of the Duke of Richmond, near Chichester.

In his *History of West Sussex*, Dallaway gives a fac-simile of the slab and the inscription, which is in the following words:

EPTVMO ET MINERVAE
 TEMPLVM
 B. SALVTE. DO. DIVINAE
 AVCTORITA. CLAVD.
 GIDVBNI. R. IC. CAL. BRIT.
 . . GIVM. FABROR. E. QVI. IN. FO.
 C.D.S.D. DONANTE. AREAM.
 . . . ENTE. PVDENTINI. FIL.

The original is here given, to furnish to the reader an idea of the character of the inscriptions, which are the memorials of the labors of these Colleges of Artificers, which have been found in all countries into which the Romans extended their power. The probable translation of this inscription is as follows:

"The College of Artificers and they who there preside over the sacred rites by authority of King Cogidubnus, the Legate of Tiberius Claudius Augustus in Britain, dedicated this Temple to Neptune and Minerva, for the welfare of the imperial family. Pudens, the son of Pudentinus, having given the site."

An article on the *Origin and Progress of Gothic Architecture*, by Governor Pownall, is in the 9th volume of the *Archæologia* of the London Society of Antiquaries. This subject of the influence of the Roman artists on the native Britons is there exhibited from an interesting point of view.

"When the Romans conquered and held possession of our isle," says Governor Pownall, "they erected every sort of building and edifice of stone or of a mixture of stone and brick, and universally built with the circular arch. The British learned their arts from these Masters."

The Continent being more subject to the ravages of invading barbarians than the separated province of Britain, many of the Gaulish cities and the forts on the Rhine were destroyed. And when Constantius Chlorus resolved, at the close of the 3d century, to rebuild them, he sent to Britain for architects to execute the work of repair.

By this withdrawal of the builders from the island of Britain and by transferring them to the Continent, Britain soon lost the knowledge it had formerly acquired of Roman architecture.

But after the establishment of the Christian religion in the Empire, missionaries being sent to the provinces to convert the inhabitants, they brought with them from Rome not only the new religion but a revived knowledge of the arts, and especially of architecture, which was necessary for the building of churches.

As to the influence produced upon the Britons by their conversion to Christianity, Camden tells us that no sooner was the name of Christ preached in the English nation, than with a most fervent zeal they gave themselves to it and laid out their utmost endeavors to promote it by discharging all the duties of Christian piety, by erecting churches and endowing them. No part of the Christian world could show either more or richer monasteries.¹

Thus the skill, which for a time had been suspended if not lost, was again revived by the architects and builders who were once more brought from Rome to Britain by the Christian missionaries, who, says Pownall, "were the restorers of the Roman architecture in stone."

The huge buildings of stone erected by the monks in England, ought perhaps to be credited to a later period when the Saxons had gained possession of the island. But as Christianity had been introduced into England before that period and under the Roman control, we may agree to the theory that some of that kind of work was done at that early period.

We may, therefore, grant a large amount of likelihood to that part of the *Legend of the Craft* which reports the tradition that under the usurped reign of Carausius, St. Alban had organized the fraternity of Freemasons and bestowed upon them his favor.

¹ William Camden, "Britannia," p. cxxxii.

Whether the Legend is correct or not in attributing this important work to that martyr, it may at least be accepted as traditionally preserving the historical fact that Freemasonry was re-organized after the Roman method by the Christian missionaries.

There is abundant evidence in the old chronicles that the method of building in stone and with circular arches was always called *opus Romanum* or the Roman work. An edifice so constructed was said to be built *more Romanum*, or according to the Roman method.

The error of the legendists, however, is that they credited personally to Carausius, the usurper of the Imperial power, the patronage of Freemasonry and the appointment of St. Alban as his chief architect or Master Mason; an error in which they have been followed by Anderson and all other Masonic writers.

There is no competent historical evidence of the truth of this claim. Bede, Matthew of Westminster, and all the other old chroniclers, describe Carausius as a man of very mean extraction, treacherous to the government which employed him, unfaithful to the people he was sent to protect, sacrificing their interests to his own greed for spoil, and esteemed only for his ability as a soldier.

Of the piety and Christian constancy of Alban the same writers are lavish in their praises, but they make no reference to his skill as an architect or to his labors under Carausius as a builder. Even as to the time of his martyrdom there are difficulties. Matthew of Westminster places its date eleven years after the death of Carausius. This would not militate against his previous employment by Carausius as "the steward of his household," to use the words of Anderson, and the Master of his Works, if there were any historical evidence of the fact.

If we appeal to the testimony of Camden, whose laborious researches have left no authority uncollected and no statement unexamined which refer to the early history of Britain under the Romans, we shall find no support for the traditions of the legendists or for their expansion by Anderson and the writers who have blindly followed him.

Of Carausius we only learn from Camden that after his reconciliation with Maximian, he governed Britain in perfect peace, and that he repaired the wall at the mouth of the Clud and forti-

fied it with seven castles.¹ The only reference made by Camden to St. Alban is in a passage where he says that toward the end of Diocletian's and Maximian's reign a long and bloody struggle broke out in the Western Church and many Christians suffered martyrdom, among the chief of whom he names Albanus Verolamiensis or St. Alban. But he makes no allusion to him as an architect, nor does he mention the name of the doubtful Amphibalus. Further on, he credits to the town of Verulam the honor of having given birth to St. Alban, whom he calls "a man justly eminent for his piety and steadiness in the Christian faith; who with an invincible constancy of mind suffered martyrdom the first man in Britain."² He relates the legends which were told in connection with his passion, but while he dwells on his piety and his constancy to the faith which gave him all his fame, he says nothing of his labors as an architect nor does he in any way connect him with Carausius.

We must, therefore, reject the whole story of Carausius and St. Alban as not proven; so far as it implies that the Emperor was a great patron of Freemasonry and the Saint his Master Workman, we find no historical foundation for it. We may accept it as a mythical statement, the true meaning of which is that there was a revival of Freemasonry in England toward the time of the end of the Roman control, through the influence of the Christian missionaries, a fact for the truth of which we have, as has already been seen, sufficient authority.

Anderson says that "the true old Masonry departed from Britain with the Roman legions; for though many Roman families had settled in the south and were blended with the Britons, who had been well educated in the science and the art, yet the subsequent wars, confusions, and revolutions in this island, ruined ancient learning, till all the fine artists were dead without exception."³

Fergusson, a more learned and more accurate writer than Anderson, has arrived at almost the same conclusion. He says:

"When Rome withdrew her protecting care, France, Spain, and Britain relapsed into, and for centuries remained sunk in, a state of anarchy and barbarism as bad, if not worse than that in

¹ William Camden, "Britannia," p. lxxiv.

² See above work, p. 296.

³ "Constitutions," second edition, p. 59.

which Rome had found them three or four centuries before. It was in vain to expect that the hapless natives could maintain either the arts or the institutions with which Rome had endowed them."¹

However, Fergusson makes a very important admission later on which greatly modifies the opinion he had just expressed when, in continuing the paragraph, he says:

"But it is natural to suppose that they would remember the evidences of her greatness and her power, and would hardly go back for their sepulchers to the unchambered mole-hill barrows of their fore-fathers, but attempt something in stone, though only in such rude fashion as the state of the arts among them enabled them to execute."²

This is all that the theory advanced in this work contends. The assertion of Anderson is altogether too sweeping and general. That of Fergusson admits that the influences of Roman control had not been entirely wiped out by the leaving of the legions. Rome, which had administered the government for centuries, "could hardly fail," to use his own language, "to leave some impress of her magnificence in lands which she had so long occupied."

The testimony of all historians will not permit us to deny or to doubt that after the end of the Roman control in Britain, there was a decay of architecture as well as of the other arts. But this did not amount to a total destruction, but only to a wait. Nations who have emerged from barbarism to civilization, and who for centuries have enjoyed the refinements of culture, do not at once go back into their early savage state. There was certainly not sufficient time for the showing of this condition in the period between the leaving of the Romans and the firm establishment of the Anglo-Saxons. Nor was there that isolation which was necessary to hasten this fall from national light to national darkness. The southern parts of Britain, at least, were too near to more civilized and more Romanized Gaul to lose at once all traces of Roman refinement. Above all, the presence and the influence of the Christian missionaries who, coming from Rome, were constantly engaged in the task of converting the natives

¹ Fergusson, "Rude Stone Monuments," p. 394.

² See above work, p. 394.

to the new faith, must have been a powerful stay to any downward progress toward utter barbarism.

The links of the chain that united the builders of Britain with those of Rome had only rusted; they were not rudely snapped asunder. The influence of the methods of building pursued by the Roman Colleges of Artificers, who had done so much work and left so many memorials in Britain, were still to be felt and to be renewed when these links were strengthened and brightened by the Anglo-Saxons.

This is a new and an important subject that demands special consideration, for it brings us to an interesting phase in the history of Freemasonry.

CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

FREEMASONRY AMONG THE ANGLO-SAXONS



AFTER the departure of the Roman legions and the withdrawal of the Roman protection, Britain, left to its own resources, was soon harassed by the attacks of Scots and Picts, by savage pirates from the opposite shores of the North Sea, and by civil troubles which were the natural result of the division of power among many rival petty political groupings of the people.

Among the Britons there was one leader, Gwotheyrn, or, as he is more generally called, Vothgern, who seems to have assumed, if he did not legally possess it, a governing position over the other British princes. Feeling, after various unsuccessful attempts, that he could not, by his unaided forces, repulse the invaders, he sought the assistance of the Saxons.

The Saxons were a tribe of warlike sea-kings who occupied the western shore of what has since been known as the Duchy of Holstein, with the neighboring islands on the coast. Brought across the sea by the invitation of the Britons, they soon expelled the Picts and Scots. But, attracted by the delights of the climate and the fertility of the soil, so superior to the bogs and swamps of their own limited and half-drowned territory, they remained to contest the possession of the island with its native inhabitants.

Hence there followed a series of conflicts which led at last to the expulsion of the native Britons, who were forced to retire to the southwestern parts of the island, and allow the establishment of the Saxon control in England.

During the period of local wars which led to this change, not only of a government, but of a whole people, it is not to be supposed that much attention could have been paid to the cultivation of architecture or Freemasonry. Amid the clash of arms the laws are silent, and learning and the arts lie prostrate.

We are not to believe that all the influences of the preceding four or five centuries were wholly upset. Gildas, it is true, complains in fretful language and an involved style,¹ in the *Epistle* which is added to his *History*, of the wickedness both of the clergy and the laity. But the greatest excess does not altogether forbid the preservation of some remains of the architectural skill and taste which had been originally taught by the Roman artificers.

The Saxons themselves were not a thoroughly barbarous people. The attempts to subdue the tribes of Germany as they had those of Spain, of Gaul, and of Britain were not very successful. The fierce bravery of the Germans under the leadership of the great Hermann, a name Romanized into Arminius by Tacitus, was able to stem the progress of the Roman legions in the interior of the country and to confine them at last to the possession of a few forts on the Rhine.

The German tribes, among whom we are, of course, to count the Saxons, were thus able to retain their own manners, customs, and language, while their contact with the legions, both in war and in peace, must have given them some portion of Roman civilization.

"Many new ideas, feelings, reasoning and habits," says Sharon Turner, "must have resulted from this mixture, and the peculiar minds and views of the Germans must have been both excited and enlarged. The result of this union of German and Roman improvement was the gradual formation of that new species of the human character and society which has descended, with increasing melioration, to all the modern states of Europe."²

Dr. Anderson, when describing the Saxon inroads upon Britain, says that "The Anglo-Saxons came over all rough, ignorant heathens, despising everything but war; nay, in hatred to the Britons and Romans, they demolished all accurate structures and all the remains of ancient learning, affecting only their own barbarous manner of life, till they became Christians."³

Entick and Northouck, in their later editions of the *Book of Constitutions*, have repeated this slander. Even if it were a truth,

¹ Of all the later classical writers in Latin, says Brother Mackey, none is so difficult to understand or to translate as Gildas. Moreover, the fact that there are in existence only two of the earliest copies or codices of the original manuscript, and that later editions have indulged in many, various, and sometimes contradictory readings, add to the difficulty of correctly explaining his writings.

² "History of the Anglo-Saxons," i, p. 96.

³ "Constitutions," 2d ed., p. 60.

this claim could not have forever wiped out the connection which we are seeking to trace between the Freemasonry of the Roman Colleges and that of England in the Middle Ages. Although it might have been held up by Saxon barbarism, it is easy to prove that it could have been renewed by later contact with the architects of France.

Against this careless error of Anderson and his later editors, let us place the more accurate and better digested views of the historian of the Anglo-Saxons.

Sharon Turner, when writing of the arrival of Hengist with his Saxon followers in England, says:

"The Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain must therefore not be contemplated as a barbarization of the country. Our Saxon ancestors brought with them a superior domestic and moral character, and the rudiments of new political, juridical, and intellectual blessings. An interval of slaughter and desolation unavoidably occurred before they established themselves and their new systems in the island. But when they had completed their conquest, they laid the foundations of that national constitution, of that internal polity, of those peculiar customs, of that female modesty, and of that vigor and direction of mind, to which Great Britain owes the social progress which it has so eminently acquired."¹

The fact is that, though the Saxons introduced a style of their own, to which writers on architecture have given their name, they borrowed in their practice of the art the suggestions left by the Romans in their buildings, and used the materials of which these structures were composed. Thus a writer² on this subject says that the Saxons appear to have formed for themselves a tolerably regular and rude style, something midway between the native and the Roman in its details. Paley credits this to the buildings left by the Romans in the country, which, though not numerous, must have been really notable in number and quality long after their departure from the island.

Abundant evidence will be shown in the course of our studies that there was not a total separation or breaking off of Saxon architecture and Masonic methods of associated labor from that

¹ "History of the Anglo-Saxons," i, p. 179.

² Frederick Apthorp Paley, "Manual of Gothic Architecture," p. 14.

which was first introduced to Britain by the architects of the Roman Colleges. There were, of course, some changes to be credited partly to a want of experienced skill, partly to the suggestions of new ideas, and partly to the influence of novel religious relations. The temple, for instance, of the Romans had to be converted into the church of the Christians. But the Roman *basilica* or hall of justice was the model of the Saxon church, and the Roman architect was closely imitated, as well as he could be, by his Saxon successor. The spirit and the influence and the custom of the Roman College was not lost or even laid aside.

Scarcely more than a century elapsed between the arrival of the Saxons and the complete conquest of the country. That space of time is to be divided among the briefer periods required for the continued successes of the several chieftains. Thus it took Hengist only eight years after his first coming to firmly establish himself in the kingdom of Kent.

Only forty years after the founding of the Saxon octarchy, or eight kingdoms, Pope Gregory sent St. Augustine from Rome with missionaries to convert the Saxons to the faith of Christianity.

During all this interval many Roman buildings had existed in England, which, from their size and skill of construction, must have become models familiar to the Saxons. The temples of the Saxon idols had been built of wood, and as Gregory permitted them to be converted into Christian places of worship, the Saxon churches at first were almost all of that material. There was a deficiency of better materials. But we find an effort to use them whenever they could be obtained, so that a kind of construction called "stone carpentry" prevailed, in which we find a wood design to be carried out with stone materials.¹ In not much later times, and long before the Norman Conquest or the introduction of Gothic architecture, the Saxons built their churches, monasteries, and other public edifices entirely of stone.

Although it may be admitted that the pagan Saxons on their first arrival did indeed destroy many of the churches which had been erected by the British Christians and expelled the priests, yet it must be remembered that on the later coming of Augustine from Rome a new life was restored to architecture and the arts.

¹ Paley, "Manual of Gothic Architecture," p. 12.

As Paley says, "the frequent missions and pilgrimages to Rome, together with the importation of Italian churchmen, which took place as early as the end of the 7th century, must have exercised great influence upon ecclesiastical architecture in England."¹

We shall see, hereafter, that the Saxons repeatedly resorted to the aid of foreign workmen from Rome or from Gaul in the construction of their churches. The influences of the Roman system, derived in former times from the Roman Colleges, continued at frequent intervals to be renewed, and the link of connection was thus kept unbroken.

The principal difference between the works of the Roman and the Saxon architects has been supposed to be that the former built in stone and the latter in wood. If this were true, it is evident that all inquiry into the nature of Saxon architecture must be at an end; for as the wooden edifices must have long since perished, all the remains of stone structures which have been dug up in England will have to be credited to the age of the Roman control before the invasion of the Saxons, or to that which succeeded the conquest by the Normans. The perishable fabrics of timber erected by the Saxons would have left no traces behind.

The mistaken opinion that the Saxons built all their churches of timber was first advanced by Stow, in his *Survey of London*, and afterwards by William Somner, in his *Antiquities of Canterbury*, who says that "Before the Norman advent most of our monasteries and church buildings were of wood," and he asserts that upon the Norman Conquest these fabrics of timber grew out of use and gave place to stone buildings raised upon arches.

The Rev. J. Bentham, in his *History of the Cathedral Church of Ely*, has upset the correctness of this view with unanswerable arguments. He has shown that although there were some cases of wooden edifices, yet that the Saxon churches were generally built of stone, with pillars, arches, and sometimes vaultings of the same material. Bentham adds the following remarks which are important in the present connection as showing that the Roman influence continued to be felt in the Saxon times, and thus that the chain which we are tracing remained unbroken:

"There is great probability that at the time the Saxons were converted the art of constructing arches and vaultings and sup-

¹ Paley, "Manual of Gothic Architecture," p. 13.

porting stone edifices by columns was well known among them; they had many instances of such kind of buildings before them in the churches and other public edifices erected in the times of the Romans. For notwithstanding the havoc that had been made of the Christian churches by the Picts and Scots, and by the Saxons themselves, some of them were then in being. Bede mentions two in the city of Canterbury. . . . Besides these two ancient Roman churches it is likely there were others of the same age in different parts of the kingdom, which were then repaired and restored to their former use.”¹

Of the two Roman churches for whose existence Bentham refers to the authority of Bede, that ancient historian says, “There was on the east side of the city a church dedicated to the honor of St. Martin, built while the Romans were still in the island, wherein the queen, who, as has been said before, was a Christian, used to pray,”² and of the other that “Augustine recovered in the royal city a church which he was informed had been built by the ancient Roman Christians, and consecrated it to our Saviour.”³

In an article on Anglo-Saxon architecture, published in the *Archæological Journal* for March, 1844, Thomas Wright (no mean authority on antiquarian science) has, like Bentham, successfully combated the doctrine that all the Saxon churches were wooden. “I think,” he says, “the notion Anglo-Saxon churches were all built of wood will now hardly find supporters.” He admits, which none will deny, that there were structures of this kind. A few wooden churches are mentioned in Domesday Book,⁴ and we learn from other authorities that there were some others. But he contends that “A careful perusal of the early chroniclers would afford ample proof that churches were not only abundant among the Anglo-Saxons, but that they were far from being always mean structures.”

Speaking of the Saxon churches, which Ordericus Vitalis⁵ tells us were repaired by the Normans immediately after the Conquest

¹ “History of the Cathedral Church of Ely,” sec. v, p. 17.

² Bede, “Histoire Ecclésiastique,” lib. i, cap. 26. ³ See Bede’s work, lib. i, cap. 33.

⁴ A famous and very useful work, even to this day of the greatest historical worth. A valuation-survey of England recording the owners of the land, the nature of its use, the number of the people, their classes and businesses. The survey was begun in 1085 and was finished in 1087.

⁵ English monk and historian, born at Atham 1075, died 1143. Wrote during 1123 to 1141 his “Historia Ecclesiastica,” dealing with church and other historical matters of the time.

THE OLDEST MASONIC MINUTE IN EXISTENCE.

FAC-SIMILE OF THE OLDEST MINUTE OF THE LODGE OF EDINBURGH (MARY'S CHAPEL).

ultimo July 1599
 The qlk day George Patoun maissoun grenttit & confessit that he had offendit agane the dekin & mrs for placing of ane cowane to wrik at ane chymnay heid for tua dayis and ane half day, for the qlk offenss he submittit him self in the dekin & mrs guds willis for qt vnlaw they pless to lay to his charge, and thay having respect to the said Georges humill submissioun & of his estait, they remittit him the said offenss, Providing alwayis that gif ather he [or] ony vther brother comitt the lyke offenss heirefter that the law sall stryke vpoun thame indiscreta wtout exceptioun of personis. This wes done in prcs of Paull Maissoun dekin, Thoas Weir warden, Thoas Watt, Johne Broun, Henrie Tailzefair, the said George Patoun, & Adam Walkar.
 Ita est Adamus Gibsone norius.
 Paull Maissoun, dekin

TRANSCRIPTION.

VLTIMO JULY 1599.

The qlk day George Patoun maissoun grenttit & confessit that he had offendit agane the dekin & mrs for placing of ane cowane to wrik at ane chymnay heid for tua dayis and ane half day, for the qlk offenss he submittit him self in the dekin & mrs guds willis for qt vnlaw they pless to lay to his charge, and thay having respect to the said Georges humill submissioun & of his estait, they remittit him the said offenss, Providing alwayis that gif ather he [or] ony vther brother comitt the lyke offenss heirefter that the law sall stryke vpoun thame indiscreta wtout exceptioun of personis. This wes done in prcs of Paull Maissoun dekin, Thoas Weir warden, Thoas Watt, Johne Broun, Henrie Tailzefair, the said George Patoun, & Adam Walkar.

Ita est Adamus Gibsone norius.

Paull Maissoun, dekin.

he remarks that "If they had been mean structures and in need of repairs, it is more probable that the Normans would have built new ones." The conclusions to be drawn from Wright's article are that while there were undoubtedly some wooden structures, just as there are in this day, the Anglo-Saxons built many churches, and built them sumptuously of stone, and in the Roman manner.

The Rev. Richard Hart is therefore right when he says, on the authority of the architect Rukman, that "In the construction of their churches, the Anglo-Saxons imitated Roman models; as might naturally be expected, considering that Rome was the source from which their Christianity had been derived, the birth-place of many of their prelates and clergy, and at that period the very focus of learning and civilization."¹

We may concede that during the comparatively brief period that was spent by the Saxons after their arrival in Britain until they obtained complete possession of the country, the local wars between them and the natives must have had the effect of halting the pursuit of architecture. But it has been shown that this stop did not altogether wipe out the influence of the Roman builders who had put into effect their methods of building when the island was a province of the Empire.

We have also seen that the destruction by the Saxons of the Christian churches which had been built by Roman architects was not so thorough or so universal as has been supposed by some writers, and that they did not, as Northouck, adding to the language of Anderson, says, "root out all the seeds of learning and the arts that the Romans had planted in Britain."²

On the contrary, we have the evidence of the Venerable Bede and the repeated testimony of modern researches that there were at the time of the Saxon conversion to Christianity at least two Roman churches standing which might serve as models for the Saxon Freemasons, and many remains of Roman buildings affording materials for new structures.

Now, after the conversion, we find the chain connecting Roman Freemasonry with that pursued by the Saxons renewed and strengthened not only by these models, but by the direct

¹ "Ecclesiastical Records," ch. v, note 2, p. 217.

² Northouck, "Constitutions," Part II, ch. ii, p. 90.

influence of the leaders of religious work who were sent from Rome, and who brought with them or sent for workmen to Rome and Gaul, who might carry out *More Romano* (in the Roman manner) their designs in the building of churches and monasteries.

Butler, in his *Lives of the Saints*, a work, however, in which we must not place entire confidence, says that on the settlement of Augustine in Britain, at the close of the 6th century, when Ethelbert, the King, had been converted, and the people generally were accepting the new religion, the princes and nobles were very zealous in building and endowing churches and religious houses. Many of them, he says, traveled to Rome and other foreign parts to improve themselves in the sacred sciences.¹

That there was at that time a constant contact between Rome and Britain is evident from the frequent epistles from Gregory, the Pontiff, to Augustine and to the King Ethelbert. Missionaries were also sent to Britain to assist Augustine in his pious work, and it is not at all improbable that Freemasons came with them from Rome, or from Gaul, to be employed in the construction of churches and monasteries, with which the land was being rapidly filled.

We have more to rely on than mere supposition. There are ample records showing that workmen were imported from abroad for the purpose of building, and that thus the Roman method was renewed in the island.

Anderson is not, therefore, strictly correct when he says that the Anglo-Saxons, "affecting to build churches and monasteries, palaces and fine mansions, too late lamented the ignorant and destructive conduct of their fathers, but knew not how to repair the public loss of old architecture."² We have shown that there were some models of Roman buildings still remaining, and there was no ignorance of the need of obtaining workmen from Rome or Gaul, and no want of opportunity to obtain them.

He is, therefore, more historically right when he adds, though it does not agree with his former assertion, that these works "required many Masons, who soon formed themselves into soci-

¹ "Lives of the Saints," vol. v, pp. 418, 419.

² "Constitutions," 2d ed., p. 61.

eties or lodges by direction of foreigners who came over to help them."¹

In the year 627, Edwin, King of Northumbria, who had been converted by Paulinus, one of the missionaries of Augustine, was baptized at the city of York, the capital of his kingdom. While receiving the necessary religious instructions he built a temporary church of timber, in which the sacrament of baptism might be administered. But immediately afterward, under the direction of Bishop Paulinus, he caused the foundation to be laid of a larger and nobler church, of stone, which, although begun at once, was not finished until after his death, by his successor Oswald.²

Bede, in telling of the event, says nothing of any foreign aid that had been asked or received in its construction. However, it is evident from the facts that the church was built of stone and in a square form, like a Roman *basilica*.³ These particulars would imply the necessity of Roman Freemasons, or other foreigners familiar with the Roman methods, to carry out the work.

In the gathering of foreign Freemasons at York to erect St. Peter's Church, under the protection and favor of King Edwin, is supposed by modern Masonic writers to be the meeting incorrectly referred to in the *Legend of the Craft* as an assembly held at York, under the patronage of Prince Edwin, the son of Athelstan, three hundred years afterwards. But this subject has been so thoroughly discussed in the preceding part of this work, under the head of the *York Legend*, that it is unnecessary to renew the arguments.

Besides St. Peter's, at York, Paulinus built many other churches. Some of them we know were of stone, and the others might have been of the same material, as Bentham says, "for aught that appears to the contrary." He was certainly a great patron of church architecture. Anderson makes no mention of him,

¹ See above, "Constitutions." Mackey holds that Anderson is altogether wrong in saying that the Saxons adopted the Gothic style in building. He asserts that that style of architecture was not invented until long afterward.

² Bede, "History," lib. ii, cap. 14.

³ This is the very word used by Bede. "Majorem et augustiorem de lapida fabricare curavit basilicam." The Roman *basilica*, or Hall of Justice, was the model of all the early churches built by Roman architects, and the old *basilicae* were often converted with but little change into churches by the Christian emperors.

although, according to his custom, he should have styled him, as he does Charles Martel, a "Right Worshipful Grand Master."

Another noted architect, of a not much later period, was Benedict Biscop, Abbot of Weremouth, whom the Roman Church has declared to be a saint. During the year 675 he built a church at Weremouth, and two monasteries, one at Weremouth and one six miles distant from Jarrow. Of these Bede has given a particular account in his history. He tells us that the abbot went over into France to engage workmen to build his church after the Roman manner, and brought many back for that purpose. The work was followed up with such vigor that within a year the church was completed and divine service performed in it.

A very important fact, stated by Bede, is that when the church was nearly finished Benedict sent over to France for artificers skilled in the mystery of making glass (an art hitherto unknown in Britain), who glazed the windows and taught that ability to the Saxons. We learn from this statement that it was customary with the Saxons to seek assistance from the skill of the continental artists and handicraftsmen. This will explain the true meaning of the passage in the *Legend of the Craft*, which refers to the coming of French and other Freemasons into England in the 7th century, in the time of Charles Martel, and afterwards at the supposed Assembly at York, in the 10th century. It affords a proof of what has been frequently said in an earlier part of this work, that the *Legend of the Craft*, though often absurd as to dates and incorrect in many of its details, yet has throughout in the most important particulars a really historical foundation.

The historians of that period supply us with many proofs that churches and monasteries were erected by the Saxons of stone after the Roman manner, or that they sent abroad for architects to superintend the construction of their buildings.

Eddius Stephanus, who flourished at the beginning of the 8th century, and whose name has been transmitted to posterity by his *Life of Saint Wilfrid*, informs us that that saint, who was also Bishop of York about the middle of the 7th century, erected many fine buildings in his locality and thoroughly repaired the church of St. Peter at York, which had been much injured in the war between the Mercians and the Northumbrians. Eddius especially refers to two churches built by Wilfrid, the one at

Ripon in Yorkshire and the other at Hexham in Northumberland.

About the former he says that Wilfrid built a church at Ripon from the foundations to the top of polished stone,¹ and supported it with various pillars and porches. This cut and polished stone as a material and these columns and porticoes, where arches would probably be now required, indicate the presence and the instruction of Roman architects, whether they came from Rome or Gaul.

But of all his works, the church of St. Andrew at Hexham seems to have been the most magnificent. Hexham was a part of the crownlands of the Kings of Northumbria, and, having been settled in dower or wedding gift on Queen Ethelreda by King Egfrid, a grant of it was made to Wilfrid for the purpose of erecting it into an episcopal see, the place of a bishop.

Wilfrid began to lay the foundations of the Cathedral church in the year 674. Eddius speaks of it in terms of great admiration, and says that there was no other building like it on that side of the Alps. He describes its deep foundations and the underground rooms, all of wonderfully polished stones, and of the building consisting of many parts above the earth, supported by various columns and many porticoes, ornamented with a surprising length and height of walls, and surrounded by mouldings, and having turnings of passages sometimes ascending or descending by winding stairs, so that he asserts that he had not words to explain what this priest, taught by the spirit of God, had planned to do.

Five centuries later, in 1180, the remains of this famous church were still standing, though in a condition of decay. Richard, Prior of Hexham, who lived at that time, describes the church with still more detail. He says that the foundations were laid deep in the earth for crypts and vaults and underground chapels, and the passages which led to them were contrived with great care. The walls were of great length and height, and divided into three separate stories, which were supported by square and other kinds of well-finished columns. The walls, the capitals of the columns which supported them, and the arch of the sanctuary were decorated with historical representations, images, and

¹ *Polito lapide* is the language used by Eddius. "Vita S. Wilfridi," cap. xvii, p. 59. He uses the same words in describing the materials of the church at Hexham.

various figures in relief, carved in stone and painted in an agreeable variety. The body of the church was supplied with pent-houses and porticoes which, above and below, were divided with wonderful art by partition walls and equipped with winding stairs. Within the staircases and upon them were flights of stone steps and passages leading from them, both ascending and descending, which were disposed with so much art that multitudes of people might be there and go all around the church without being perceived by any one who was in the nave or body of the building. Many beautiful private chapels were erected with great care and workmanship in the several divisions of the porticoes, in which were altars in honor of the Blessed Virgin, of St. Michael, the Archangel, of St. John the Baptist, and of holy Apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins, with the proper furniture for each. Some of these, Prior Richard says, were remaining at his day, and appeared like so many turrets and fortified places.¹

A church of such grand proportions, such massive strength, and such artistic construction, cannot, for a moment, be supposed to be built by the untrained skill of Saxon Freemasons. The stone material, the supporting arches, the intricate passage, the winding stairs, all proclaim the presence of foreign architects and a continuation or a revival in England of the methods of Roman Freemasonry. Nor is this at all unlikely.

Wilfrid, although a Saxon, had from an early age received his religious education in Rome. After his return to Northumberland, he had not only maintained a constant correspondence with, but had made several visits to, the imperial city, and was personally well acquainted with France. When, therefore, he began the construction of important religious houses of such magnitude, he had every facility for the hiring of foreign workmen, and there can be no reason for denying that he availed himself of the opportunities which were afforded to him. Indeed the Venerable Bede confirms this when he says that the Most Reverend Wilfrid was the first of the English bishops who taught the churches of the English nation the Catholic, that is the Roman, mode of life.²

During the long period of forty-five years, in which he occupied the Episcopal See of York, Bishop Wilfrid caused a very

¹ "Richardi, Prior Hagustal," lib. i, cap. iii. ² Bede, "History," lib. iv, cap. ii.

great number of churches and monasteries to be built. He must in that way have greatly enlarged and improved the architectural skill of his people by the bringing into the country of foreign artists.

Singularly enough, neither Anderson nor his successors, Entick and Northouck, in the various editions of the *Book of Constitutions* thought Wilfrid to be worthy of the slightest mention. Undoubtedly we have historical evidence that Bishop Wilfrid was far better entitled than that less important and less useful man, St. Alban, to have it said of him that "He loved Freemasons well and cherished them much." Indeed all that is said in the *Legend of the Craft* of the first martyr might with more likelihood be credited to Wilfrid, Bishop of York.

Bentham, in his *History of the Cathedral Church of Ely*,¹ has said of Wilfrid, relying on the authority, of almost the same period, of Bede, of Eddius Stephanus, and of Richard, the Prior of Hexham, that because of the favor and the liberal gifts bestowed upon him by the kings and the nobility of Northumberland, he rose to a degree of wealth so as to vie with princes in state and style, and was thus able to found several rich monasteries and to build many stately edifices. Following up these great undertakings he gave due encouragement to the most skillful builders and craftsmen of every kind who were eminent in their several trades. He kept them in his service by proper rewards. As the *Legend of the Craft* says of St. Alban, "He made their pay right good."

Some of these workmen he obtained at Canterbury, whither they had been taken by Augustine to aid him in the construction of the churches in Kent. Eddius is distinct on this point. He says, in his *Life of Wilfrid*, that when he returned home from his visit to Canterbury, he brought back not only skillful singers, who might instruct his choirs in the Roman method of singing, but also Freemasons and artists of almost every kind.²

Richard, Prior of Hexham, says that he secured from Rome Italy, France, and other countries where he could find them,

¹ "History of the Cathedral Church of Ely," p. 23.

² Eddius, "Vita S. Wilfridi," cap. xiv. *Caementarius* is the word employed by Eddius. Now, *caementarius* was the word used in mediæval Latin to designate a member of the craft of stone workers, an Operative Freemason. Ducange cites *Magister caementariorum*, the "Master of the Freemasons," as used by mediæval writers to denote one who presided over the building, him whom he calls the Master of the Works.

Freemasons and skillful artificers of other kinds, whom he brought to England for the purpose of carrying on his works.¹

William of Malmesbury also says that to construct the buildings that Wilfrid had designed Freemasons had been attracted from Rome by the hope of liberal rewards,² and both Eddius, his biographer, and William of Malmesbury agree in declaring that he was eminent for his knowledge and skill in the science of architecture.

The spirit of improvement and the skill in architecture which had been introduced into Northumberland by its Bishop were not confined to his own country, but through his influence were extended to the other kingdoms of the Heptarchy, the seven governments of England during the 5th to the 9th centuries. They made their way even into the more northern parts of the island. Bede informs us³ that in the beginning of the 8th century, Naitan, King of the Picts, sent messengers to Ceolfrid, Abbot of the Monastery of Weremouth, praying to have architects sent him to build a church in his nation after the Roman manner.

"Hence," says Bentham, "it would seem that the style of architecture generally used in that age in England was called the Roman manner, and was the same that was then used at Rome in Italy and in other parts of the empire."⁴

John M. Kemble, when commenting on circumstances like these in the learned Introduction to his *Diplomatic Codex of the Saxon Æra*, has very justly said that "The great advance in civilization made especially in Northumberland before the close of the 7th century proves that even the rough denizens of that inhospitable portion of our land were apt and earnest scholars."⁵

¹ De Roma quoque, et Italia, et Francia, et de aliis terris ubicumque invenire poterat, *caementarios* et quoslibet alios industrios artifices secum retinuerat, ed ad opera sua facienda secum in Angliam adduxerat. "Richardi, Prior Hagustal," lib. i, cap. v.

² "Caementarios, quos ex Roma spes munificentiae attraxerat. Gulilm. Malsmb. de Gestis Pontif." Angl., p. 272. The "spes munificentiae" was the expectation of higher wages, just what the "Legend of the Craft" says that St. Alban established. It is curious to remark how everything that that Legend ascribes to St. Alban may with equal propriety be attributed on historic authority to St. Wilfrid. Brother Mackey pointed out how strange it is that the later Masonic writers as well as the legendists should have completely ignored St. Wilfrid, who was the real reformer, if not actual founder, of the English Freemasonry in connection with the Roman.

³ In Book V, chapter xxi of his "Ecclesiastical History."

⁴ "History of the Cathedral Church of Ely," p. 25.

⁵ "Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici." This learned and laborious work, edited by Kemble and published in 1839, in six large octavo volumes, by the English Historical Society, contains copies either in Saxon or in Latin of nearly all the royal and other charters issued during the Saxon rule and preserved in various collections.

The next eminent Saxon patron of Freemasonry of whom we have any record is Albert, who in 767 became the successor of Egbert as Archbishop of York. A church built by Paulinus in the 7th century, having been much damaged by a fire and not having been sufficiently repaired, was wholly taken down by Albert, who determined to rebuilt it. This he did with the assistance of two eminent architects, his disciples, Eanbald, who succeeded him in the See of York, and the celebrated Alcuin, who afterward introduced learning into the court of Charlemagne, of whom he became the teacher. Alcuin, in a poem *On the Pontiffs and Saints of the Church of York*,¹ has given a full description of the rebuilding of the church, from which we may learn the degree of perfection to which architecture had then arrived. We find in that description the account of a complete and nicely finished piece of architecture, "the new construction of a wonderful church," as Alcuin expresses it, consisting of a tall building supported by solid columns, with arches, vaulted roofs, splendid doors and windows, porticoes, galleries, and thirty altars variously ornamented. "This templum," says the poem of Alcuin,² "was built under the orders of the Master Albert by his two disciples, Eanbald and Alcuin, working harmoniously and devotedly."

The thieving attacks of the Danish pirates, and their more lasting invasion in the latter part of the 9th century, though marked by all the cruelty of a barbarous enemy, and with the destruction of churches and monasteries and the burning of many towns and villages, must of course have halted for a time all progress in architecture. But it could have been only a temporary suspension. Their occupancy lasted but twelve years, and the knowledge of the Roman method which had been acquired by the Saxons could not have been lost in that brief period, nor were all the monuments of their skill destroyed. Enough remained for models, and many of the old Freemasons must have been still

¹ "Pontificibus et Sanctis Ecclesiæ Eboracensis." Published in 1691 by Dr. Thomas Gale in his "Historiæ Britannicæ, Saxonicæ et Anglo-Danicæ Scriptores quindecim," usually cited as "Gale's XV Scriptores."

² "Hoc duo discipali templum doctore iubente,
Ædificarunt Eanbaldus et Alcuinus, ambo
Concordes operi devota mente studentes."
— Alcuin De Pontifet Sanct. Eccl. Ebor.

living when civilization was renewed in England by the restoration of Alfred to the throne.

Asser, the contemporary and the biographer of Alfred or whoever assumed his name,¹ admits that during the Danish rule the arts and sciences had begun to be neglected, but the wise and vigorous measures pursued by Alfred, on his becoming King, soon restored them to more than their former condition of prosperity.

Matthew of Westminster, a Benedictine monk who lived in the 14th century and whose story of events is valuable because it is that of a careful observer, tells us that with a genius of his own, not hitherto displayed by others, Alfred occupied himself in building edifices which were venerable and noble beyond anything that had been attempted by his predecessors, and that many Frenchmen and natives of other countries came to England, being attracted by his amiable and affable character and by the protection and gifts which he bestowed on all strangers of worth, whether noble or low-born. Among these foreigners we must naturally suppose that there were many architects and builders from France and Italy, who came to find employment in the various works on which the king was engaged.² Matthew also tells us that Alfred bestowed one-sixth of his revenues on the many artisans whom he employed and who were skillful in every kind of work on land.³

Florence of Worcester, a monk who wrote in the 12th century, says that among the other abilities of Alfred he was skilled in architecture and excelled his predecessors in building and adorning his palaces, in constructing large ships for the security of his coasts, and in erecting castles in convenient parts of the country.⁴

Indeed all the chroniclers of his own and following ages concur in attributing to the great Alfred, the best and wisest mon-

¹ A question has been raised by Wright, and probable reasons given for the doubt, of the authenticity of Asser's "Life of Alfred," which work he is disposed to believe was written as late as the latter part of the 12th century ("Essays on Archæology," i, 183). Even if this were correct, it would not affect the truth of the statement in the text.

² "Matthew of Westminster," c. xvi, ad annum 871.

³ "Matthew of Westminster," ad annum 888.

⁴ Flor. Wegorn, ad annum 871, 887. He calls him "in arte architectonica summus" (a leader in the art of architecture).

arch who ever sat on the English throne, the revival of Saxon architecture and the bringing anew into the kingdom of foreign architects from Italy and France, so that the connection between the Roman and the Saxon was preserved.

In the last year of the 9th century, Alfred was succeeded by his eldest son, Edward, a prince who has been described as inferior to his father in learning and the love of literature, but who by his powers in war greatly extended the boundaries of his kingdom. Though not so great a patron of architecture as his father, the science did not decay during his reign. He founded or repaired some churches and monasteries, and built several cities and towns, which he provided with strong walls as a protection against the sudden attacks of the Danes.

In 924 Edward was succeeded by his illegitimate son, Athelstan. Although the records of the old chroniclers of England speak only of a few monasteries that were founded by Athelstan, the legendary history of the Craft gives to him an important character as having granted a charter for the calling of an Assembly of Freemasons at the city of York. To this Assembly the legendists as well as later writers up to a very recent time have sought to trace the origin of Freemasonry in England.

This subject has already been very fully discussed in our chapter on the *York Legend*, and it will be unnecessary to renew the discussion here. Brother Mackey, since that chapter was first written, diligently examined all the charters granted by King Athelstan, copies of the originals of which are contained in the *Codex Diplomaticus*, published by the English Historical Society, and he failed to find among them any one in which there is the slightest allusion to the calling of an Assembly of Freemasons at York. If such a charter ever existed (of which we have no idea), it has been lost beyond all hope of recovery. The non-appearance of the charter certainly does not prove that it never was granted, but its absence deprives the advocates of the York theory of what would be the best and most unanswerable evidence of the truth of the Legend.

In fact Edgar, his nephew, who ascended the throne in 959, after the brief reigns of his father, Edmund, his uncle, Edred, and his brother, Edwy, was a greater encourager of architecture, or, as the old historians of Freemasonry would have called him,

"a better patron of the Craft," than Athelstan. During his reign the land was so seldom mixed up in strife that the early chroniclers have styled him "Edgar the Pacific." Thus was he enabled to devote himself to the improvement of his kingdom and the condition of his subjects. He founded more than forty monasteries, and among them the magnificent abbey of Ramsay, in Huntingdonshire. From a description of this abbey, given in its history, which has been preserved by Gale, we are led to believe that in the reign of Edgar the old style of building churches in the square form of a *basilica* or Roman Hall of Justice was beginning to be given up for the cross or cruciform shape, as more symbolically suited to a Christian temple. He built also the old Abbey church of Westminster, which Sir Christopher Wren says, in the *Parentalia*, "was probably a good, strong building after the manner of the age, not much altered from the Roman way."

This way, Wren says, was with piers or round pillars (stronger than Tuscan or Doric), round-headed arches and windows. And he refers, as instances of this method, borrowed from the Roman, to various buildings erected before the Conquest of England by the Normans.

Whatever may be said of the private and personal character of Edgar, and he can not be acquitted of the charge of being free to the point of excess in his morals, as a king he certainly sought to improve the condition of his people, to secure the comfort of his subjects, and to encourage the cultivation of the arts and sciences, among which architecture was not the least favored by him.

It is hardly necessary to pursue the details of the condition of the art of building in the few remaining years of the Anglo-Saxon government. Such a plan would be proper to use in a professional history of English architecture. But enough has been said to maintain the theory of the origin and rise of Freemasonry, which is the special object of the present work.

We have already shown that the system of associated workmen in the craft of building arose in the Roman Colleges of Artificers, of Builders, or of Freemasons, call them by either name; that this system, with the skill that accompanied it, was introduced from Rome into Britain at the time of the real conquest of that island by Claudius, by the artisans who followed the legions

and became colonists of the province; that on the accession of the Saxons to the government of the country, though the Britains were driven to the remote parts of the island in the West, monuments of the Roman workmen remained to keep the method; that the Saxons themselves were not a wholly barbarous people, and that by their rapid conversion to Christianity the communication with Rome was renewed through the missionaries who came to them from that city; that when the monks began the construction of religious houses they sent to Italy or to Gaul for workmen who were educated in the Roman method; and that thus, by the architectural works which were accomplished under the protection of the Church, the chain connecting the Freemasons of the Roman Colleges with the Saxon Builders remained unbroken.

From the death of Edgar to the end of the Saxon government and the establishment of the Norman race upon the throne of England, though history records few great architectural achievements, nothing was absolutely lost of the skill and the methods of Freemasonry which had been acquired in the lapse of centuries and from continual communications with foreign artists. Even the linking up of the reigns of three Danish kings, of which two were very brief, produced no bad effects. So when Harold, the last Saxon monarch, was slain at the battle of Hastings, in the year 1066, and the crown passed into the possession of the Norman William, many specimens of Saxon architecture were still remaining.

There is one event in the history of the Anglo-Saxons which is of too much importance to be passed over without an extended and careful notice. We allude to the establishment of Gilds. These were fraternities which, as will hereafter be shown, gave "form and feature" to the organization of the modern Masonic Lodges.

This is a subject of so much interest in the present inquiry that it can not be dismissed at the close of the investigation of a different though related topic. Its consideration must therefore be taken up in a separate and following chapter.

CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO

THE ANGLO-SAXON GILDS



GILD signified among the Saxons a fraternity or sodality or brotherhood united together for the accomplishment by the co-operative exertions of the members of some predetermined purpose.

The word is derived from the Anglo-Saxon verb *gildan*, "to pay," and refers to the fact that every member of the Gild was required to give something to its support. Hence Cowel defines Gilds to be "fraternities originally contributing sums towards a common stock."

Assuming that the characteristic of a Gild organization is that it is a society of men united together for mutual assistance in the gaining of an object, or for the cultivation of friendship, or for the observance of religious duties, we may say that the Gild has under some of these aspects existed in all civilized countries from the earliest ages.

The priesthood of Egypt was a fraternity containing in its organization much that resembles the more modern Gild, the priests possessing peculiar privileges and forming a body separated from the rest of the nation, by the right of making their own laws and electing their own members, who were received into what may be appropriately called the sacerdotal Gild, by certain ceremonies of initiation. The trades and handicrafts were divided into their various professions. Thus the artificers and the boatmen of the Nile were each a separate class,¹ and as the practice of a trade was made hereditary, being handed down from father to son, and was restricted to certain families, we may well suppose that each of these classes made up a Gild. We may remark, in passing, that while the handicraftsmen and traders were generally held by the higher orders among the Egyptians in low repute,

¹ Thomas Kenreck, "Ancient Egypt, under the Pharaohs," vol. ii, p. 36. London, 1850.

the art of building seems to have occupied an honored place in the national estimation. While we find no record on the funeral monuments of any of the other working-classes, the names of architects alone appear in the inscriptions with those of priests, warriors, judges, and chiefs of provinces, the only ranks to which the honor of a funeral record was permitted.¹

The *Eranos* among the Greeks was in every minute respect the analogue or twin of the Gild, not perhaps the same thing but bearing a marked likeness to it. Donnegan defines it to be "a society under certain rules and regulations, having a fund, contributed by the members, formed for various purposes, such as succoring indigent members."²

Clubs or societies of this kind established for charitable or convivial purposes, and sometimes for both, were very common at Athens, and were also found in other cities of Greece. These Grecian Gilds were founded on the principle of mutual relief. If a member was reduced to poverty, or was in temporary distress for money, he applied to the *Eranos*, or Gild, and the relief required was given by the members. Sometimes it was considered as a loan, to be repaid when the borrower was in better circumstances. The *Eranos* met at stated periods, generally once a month, had its peculiar regulations, was presided over by an officer styled the *Eranarches*, and the *Eranistai*, or members, paid each their monthly dues. There does not really appear to have been any material difference between the organization of these sodalities or brotherhoods and the Saxon and mediæval social Gilds.

It is scarcely necessary, after the description that has already been given of the Roman Colleges of Artificers, to say that they were analogous or similar to the Craft Gilds. Indeed, it is a part of the hypothesis maintained in the present work, that the latter derived, directly or indirectly, the suggestion of their peculiar form as associated craftsmen from the former.

The *Agapæ* or Love Feasts of the early Christians, though at first established for the holding of a religious rite, later became gild-like in their character, as they were sustained by the gifts and dues of the members, and funds were distributed for the

¹ Kenreck, "Ancient Egypt," vol. ii, p. 37.

² See "Encyclopædia of Freemasonry," Mackey-Hughan-Hawkins' edition.

relief of widows, orphans, and the poorer brethren. Indeed, they are supposed by writers upon the Church to have imitated the Grecian *Eranoi*. The government looked upon them as secret societies, and they were for that reason forbidden by law.

Brentano, who has written a learned introduction to Toulmin Smith's *English Gilds*, published by the Early English Text Society, is disposed to trace the origin of Gilds to the feasts of the old German tribes from Scandinavia, which were also called Gilds. Among the German tribes, all events that especially related to the family, such as births, marriages, and deaths, were celebrated by sacrificial feasts in a family reunion. Similar feasts took place on certain public occasions and anniversaries, which often afforded an opportunity for the preparing of plans for piracy and plunder by one tribe or another.

We are not inclined to trace the origin of the Saxon and English Gilds to so low and decayed a source, and we subscribe to the opinions expressed by Wilda,¹ one of the ablest of the German writers on this subject, who can not find anything of the true nature of the Gild in these Scandinavian feasts of the family. Hartwig,² who has also studied this point, agrees with Wilda.

However, it is very evident that the fundamental or basic sentiment of the Gild — that is, the desire to establish fraternal relations for mutual aid and protection — was not peculiar to the Saxons. It may rather be thought of as a human sentiment, arising from the innate or inborn knowledge of his own condition, which makes man aware of his infirmity and weakness in isolation, and causes him to seek for strength in association with his fellow-man.

The same type, therefore, if not the exact form of the Gild, has appeared in almost all civilized nations, even at the remotest periods of their history. Wherever men may accustom themselves to meet on stated occasions, to celebrate some appointed anniversary or festival and to eat of a common meal, to break bread together, that by this regular communion a spirit of fraternity may be established, and every member may feel that upon the association with which he is thus united he may depend for relief of his necessities or protection of his interests, such an asso-

¹ "Das Gildwesen in Mittelalter."

² "Untersuchungen über die ersten Anfänge des Gildveerens."

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ciation, sodality, brotherhood, or fraternity, call it by whatever name you may, will be in substantial nature a Gild.

Wilda thinks that the peculiar character of the Gilds was derived from the Christian principle of love, and that they actually originated in the monastic unions, where every member shared the benefits of the whole community in good works and prayers, into the advantages of which union laymen were afterward admitted.

The unsoundness of this theory is evident from the fact that the same characteristic of mutual aid existed in the pagan nations long before the advent of Christianity, and was presented in those sodalities which represent the form of the modern Gild.

The admission of Wilda and Hartwig that the early Saxon Gilds were so tinctured or affected with the superstitious customs of the pagan sacrificial feasts, and that the Church had to labor with vigor and for a long time to destroy them, tends to prove that we must look beyond the monasteries for the true origin of the Gild.

We are inclined, therefore, to credit them to that spirit of associated labor and union of refreshment which had existed in the Roman Colleges of Artificers, where, as has been shown, there existed that organized union of interests which continued to be displayed in the Gilds.

Of course we need not aver that the Gilds were the legitimate and uninterrupted successors of the Roman Colleges, following along an unbroken chain of events and of closest relations. But we will say that the suggestion of the advantages to be derived from an association in work, regulated by ordinances that had been agreed on, governed by officers who might judiciously direct the exercise of skill and the employment of labor, the result of all of which was a combination of interests and the growth of a fraternal feeling, was suggested by these Roman institutions, and more especially adopted by the Craft Gilds, which, at a later period in the Middle Ages, directed all the architectural labors in every country of Europe.

Many authors have traced the origin of these Craft Gilds to the Roman Colleges. Brentano does not absolutely deny this claim, but he thinks it needs to be proved historically by its defenders. He believes it more probable that they descended

from "the companies into which, in episcopal and royal towns (governed by bishop or king as the case might be), the bond handicraftsmen of the same trade were ranged under the superintendence of an official, or that they took their origin from a common subjection to police control or from common obligations to pay certain taxes or imposts." ¹

We find in Germany that these communities existed under the control of bishops. Arnold, in his *Constitutional History of the German Free Cities*,² describes one at Worms in the 11th century. To the Manor of the Bishop were attached, among other dependants, a class of villeins or bondsmen called *dagewardi*. These were divided into *coloni*, or workmen on the country manor, and *operarii*, or handicraftsmen, who were ranged, according to their trades, into several unions or societies. From these persons the continental Gilds of the Middle Ages are supposed in error to have been derived. Still, when their bondage ceased, these societies may have developed themselves into Free Gilds. But the Free Gilds existed before, and the bond unions enforced by authority of bishops must have been organized simply for the convenience of the employer. There could not have been in them any of the peculiar characteristics of the free and independent Gild.

But even if this speculative notion of Brentano, that the Gilds were derived from the enforced association of the episcopal and royal bond handicraftsmen, were admitted to be correct, it would be only lengthening the chain connecting them with the Roman Colleges by the insertion of another link. We should have in that case to look to these Roman sodalities for the idea of union and concerted action, which in either of those instances must have influenced the combination of handicraftsmen.

However, Brentano at once gives up the views which he had just advanced. He admits that they deserve no further consideration, because Wilda has shown that the Craft Gilds did not spring from subjection, but arose from the freedom of the handicraft class.

Now, it is precisely at this point that the Craft Gilds most resemble the Roman Colleges. Founded originally in the earliest days of Rome for the express purpose of giving to the working-

¹ "English Gilds," in *Early English Text Society Publications*, p. 114.

² "Verfassungsgeschichte der Deutschen Freistädte."

classes a separate and independent place in the public polity and powers, they preserved this independence to the latest times and fostered the spirit of freedom which sprang naturally from it. Their spirit of freedom and independence indeed often bordered upon excess. Thus they were watched and feared in the latter days of the republic and during the empire, because their love of freedom sometimes led them to start conspiracies against the Government, which they supposed had the design of upsetting or lessening their rights. To protect these privileges and to preserve this freedom they instituted the office of Patrons, men of distinction and influence, not of their trade, but selected from the order of patricians, the aristocrats, who were to be the preservers of their franchises or charters.

There is abundant historical evidence that the system of Gilds was well known to the Anglo-Saxons. Toulmin Smith, to whom we are indebted for the collection of Gild charters of a later date, says that "English Gilds, as a system of widespread practical institutions, are older than any kings of England. They are told of in the books that contain the oldest relics of English laws. The old laws of King Alfred, of King Ina, of King Athelstan, of King Henry I., reproduce still older laws in which the universal existence of Gilds is treated as a well-known fact, and in which it is taken to be a matter of course that everyone belonged to some Gild. As population increased Gilds multiplied; and thus, while the beginnings of the older Gilds are lost in the dimness of time and remain quite unknown, the beginnings of the later ones took place in methods and with accompanying forms that have been recorded."¹

But it is not upon those laws alone that we have to depend for proof of the antiquity of the Saxon Gilds. The records of a few of the old Gilds still remain and show that the idea of association for mutual assistance which is the very spirit of the Gild organization, was common at least twelve centuries ago among our Saxon ancestors.

Among the laws of Ina, who reigned from the year 688 to 725, are two which relate to the liability of the brethren of a Gild in the case of slaying a thief.² King Alfred also refers to the duties

¹ "Traditions of the Old Crown House," p. 28.

² Thorpe's "Anglo Laws," Ina 16, 21.

of the Gild when he decrees that in the case of a crime the Brothers of the Gild (gegyldan) shall pay a portion of the fine.¹

The *Judicia Civitatis Lundoniæ*, or Statutes of the City of London, contain several laws for the regulation of the various Gilds, and outlining the duties of the members. The "Cnyhten Gyld," or Young Men's Gild, is mentioned by Stow as existing in the time of King Edgar, who granted the liberty of a Gild forever to "thirteene knights or soldiers well beloved of the king and the realme (for service by them done), which requested to have a certaine portion of land on the east part of the citi, left desolate and forsaken by the inhabitants by reason of too much servitude."²

Thirteen was a favorite number in the religious Gilds. Ducange explains the reason in a quotation which he makes from an *Epistle to the Church of Utrecht*, wherein it is said that "a fraternity, commonly called a Gild, was formed, consisting of twelve men to represent the twelve apostles, and one woman to represent the Virgin Mary."³

The text of the "writing," or charter, by which Orky instituted a Gild at Abbotsbury has been preserved. Orky was the "huscarl," or one of the household troops,⁴ of Edward the Confessor, and there is a charter of that king in existence whereby he gives permission to Tole, the widow of Orky, or Urk, to leave at death her lands to the monastery at the same place where the Gild was established.

The original charter of Orky's Gild, as written in the Anglo-Saxon language, with a generally correct translation into English, has been printed by Thorpe in his *Diplomatarium*.⁵ As it is one of the earliest of the Saxon charters that exists, and as it will be interesting in enabling the reader to compare its provisions with those of the later Gilds on the pattern of which the Masonic Gilds, or Fraternities, were formed, it is here presented entire.

¹ "Leges Ælf," 27.

² "Surveye of London," p. 85.

³ Ducange, "Glossarium." See the word *Gilda*.

⁴ The "huscarlas," says Kemble, were among the Saxons, and, until after the Norman Conquest, the household troops or immediate body-guard of the King. "The Saxons in England," vol. ii, p. 118.

⁵ "Diplomatarium Ang.," pp. 605-608. Brother Mackey has here made a few alterations in Thorpe's translation, to conform more strictly to the Anglo-Saxon original.

It must, however, be observed that it was not a Craft, but a religious Gild, and hence we find no allusion to the privileges and obligations of the former, which always composed a part of their written regulations.

ORKY'S GILD AT ABBOTSBURY

"Here is made known in this writing that Orky has given the Gildhall and the place at Abbotsbury to the praise of God and St. Peter, and for the gildship to possess now and henceforth of him and his consort for long remembrance. Who so shall avert this, let him account with God at the great day of judgment.

"Now these are the covenants which Orky and the gild brothers at Abbotsbury have chosen to the praise of God and the honor of St. Peter and their souls' need.

"This is first: Three nights before St. Peter's Mass, from every gild brother one penny, or one penny worth of wax, whichever be most needed in the monastery, and on the mass' eve one broad loaf, well raised and well sifted, for our common alms; and five weeks before Peter's Mass day let each gild brother contribute one gildsester full of clean wheat, and let that be rendered within two days, on pain of forfeiting the entrance fee (ingang), which is three sestors of wheat. And let the wood be rendered within three days after the corn contribution, from every full gild brother (riht gegyldan)¹ one burthen (byrthene) of wood, and two from those who are not full brothers, or let him pay one gildsester of corn. And he who undertakes a charge, and does it not satisfactorily, let him be liable in his entrance fee, and let there be no remission. And let the gild brother who abuses another within the gild, with serious intent, make atonement to all the society to the amount of his entrance, and afterward to the man whom he abused, as he may settle it, and if he will not

¹ There is some difficulty here. The words "riht gegyldan" in the original mean literally "lawful members of the Gild"; and the word "ungyldan" signifies "those who are not members," for the particle "un" has the privative or limiting or reversing power in Anglo-Saxon as in English. Thorpe translates the meaning as "regular and non-regular gild brothers." Brother Mackey adopted with hesitation Kemble's translation ("Saxons in England," i, 511). But what are "non-regular" or "not full brethren"? As "gegyldan" also means "to pay a contribution," we might suppose that the "riht gegyldan" were those who had paid their dues to the gild, and the "ungegyldan" were those who were in arrears. This would be a reasonable explanation of the passage; but there are grammatical difficulties in the way.

submit to compensation, let him forfeit the fellowship and every other privilege of the Gild. And let him who introduces more men than he ought, without leave of the steward and the purveyors (feomera), pay his entrance. And if death befall any one in our society, let each gild brother contribute one penny at the corpse for the soul, or pay according to three gild brothers (gylde be pry gegildum).¹ And if any one of us be sick within sixty miles, then we shall find fifteen men who shall fetch him; and if he be dead thirty; and they shall bring him to the place which he desired in his life. And if he die in the vicinity, let the steward have warning to what place the corpse is to go, and let the steward then warn the gild brothers, as many as ever he can ride to or send to, that they come thereto and worthily attend the corpse and convey it to the monastery and earnestly pray for the soul. That will rightly be called a gildlaw which we thus do and it will besem it well both before God and before the world; for we know not which of us shall soonest depart hence. Now we believe through God's support that this aforesaid agreement will benefit us all, if we rightly hold it.

"Let us fervently pray to God Almighty that he have mercy on us; and also to his holy Apostle St. Peter, that he intercede for us and make our way clear to everlasting rest; because for love of him we have gathered this gild (gegaderodon). He has the power in heaven that he may let into heaven whom he will and refuse whom he will not; as Christ himself said to him in his Gospel: 'Peter, I deliver to thee the key of heaven's kingdom; and whatsoever thou wilt have bound on earth, that shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou wilt have unbound on earth, that shall be unbound in heaven.' Let us have trust and hope in him that he will ever have care of us here in the world, and after our departure hence, be a help to our souls; May he bring us to everlasting rest."

These covenants, which in later Gild charters are called "Ordinances," and by the Mason Gilds "Constitutions," very clearly define the objects of the association. These were not connected with the pursuit of any handicraft, but were altogether of a religious and charitable nature. Infirm brethren were to be sup-

¹ Carefully copied into modern English, word for word, but not clear. Kemble does not attempt a translation, but gives the passage the benefit of a blank.

ported, the dead were to be buried, prayers were to be said for the repose of their souls, and religious services were to be performed. There was an annual meeting on the feast of St. Peter, and regulations were made for the collection of alms on that day for the benefit of the poor. Especial attention was paid to the preservation of fraternal relations of mutual kindness between the members.

We see in all these particulars the germ of those similar regulations which are met with in the "Constitutions of the Freemasons," compiled in the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, and which were, the necessary changes having been made, finally developed in the regulations of the Speculative Freemasons in the 18th century.

The substance of the regulations of this as well as of two other Gilds established about the same time, one at Exeter and the third at Cambridge, was the binding together in close fraternal union of man to man, which was sometimes fortified and impressed by the taking of oaths for the faithful performance of mutual help.

The charter of the "Thanes' ¹ Gild at Cambridge" has been published by both Thorpe and Kemble from a Cottonian manuscript. As it contains some points not embraced in the charter of the Orky Gild, it is here presented, as a further means of comparison with the charters of the later Craft Gilds. The original is of course in Anglo-Saxon, and we have adopted the translation of Thorpe, with the exception of a few changes.

THE THANES' GILD AT CAMBRIDGE

"Here in this writing is the declaration of the agreement which this society has resolved in the Thaness' Gild at Cambridge. That then is first that each should take an oath to the others on the halidom² of true fidelity before God and the world. And all the society should support him who had most right. If any gild brother die let all the gildship bring him to where he desired; and

¹ "Thane" was first used to mean a soldier companion of an English king having special duties but later on the word was given to a freeman having property. It comes from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning "grown up."

² Meaning "holy" in the Anglo-Saxon language and often applied to the sacred things on or by which oaths and pledges were made to render them all the more binding.

let him who should come thereto pay a sester (about eight quarts) of honey; and let the gildship inherit of the deceased half a farm. And let each contribute two pence to the alms and thereof bring what is fitting to St. Ætheldryth. And if any gild brother be in need of his fellows' aid and it be made known to the fellow nearest to the gild brother, and, unless the gild brother himself be nigh, the fellow neglect it, let him pay one pound. If the lord neglect it, let him pay one pound unless he be on the lord's need or confined to his bed. And if any one slay a gild brother let there be nothing for compensation but eight pounds. But if the slayer scorns the compensation let all the gildship avenge the gild brother and all bear the feud. But if a gild brother do it let all bear alike. And if any gild brother slay any man and he be an avenger by compulsion and compensate for his violence and the slain be a nobleman let each gild brother contribute half a mark for his aid; if the slain be a churl¹ (ceorl) two oras (100 pence), if he be Welch one ora. But if the gild brother slay any one through wantonness and with gile, let himself bear what he has wrought. And if a gild brother slay his gild brother through his own folly let him suffer on the part of the kindred for that which he has violated, and buy back his gildship with eight pounds, or forever forfeit our society and friendship. And if a gild brother eat or drink with him who slew his gild brother unless it be before the king or the bishop of the diocese or the aldermen, let him pay one pound unless with his two bench comrades (gesetlung) he can deny that he knew him. If any gild brother abuse another let him pay a sester of honey unless he can clear himself with his two bench comrades. If a servant (cniht) draw a weapon let the lord pay one pound and let the lord get what he can and let all the gildship aid him in getting his money. And if a servant wound another let the lord avenge it and all the gildship together, so that seek he whatever he may (sece whet he sece) he have not life (feorh). And if a servant sit within the storeroom let him pay a sester of honey; and if any one have a footstool let him do the same. And if any gild brother die out of the land or be taken sick let his gild brethren fetch him and convey him, dead or alive, to where he may desire, under the same penalty that has been said, if he die at home and the gild brother attend not the corpse. And let the gild brother who does

¹ An Anglo-Saxon freeman of the lowest rank.

not attend his morning discourse (morjen space) pay his sester of honey."

In this agreement of an early Gild, we will again notice that, though the regulations are few, they all partake of that spirit of mutual kindness which has been so plainly marked a feature of the Gild organizations of all ages, and of which the Masonic Lodge is but a fuller development.

The principal points worthy of notice are as follows:

1. There was an oath of fidelity.
2. The sick were to be nursed and the dead buried.
3. A brother was bound to give aid to another brother if he were called upon.
4. If a member got into trouble or difficulty the Gild was to come to his assistance.
5. The injuries or wrongs of a member were to be taken as their own by the other members of the Gild.
6. To associate knowingly with one who had done injury to a Gild member was an offense calling for punishment.
7. The severest punishment that could be inflicted on a member was to be expelled from the body.

These seven points embrace the true spirit of the Masonic institution. They may be profitably compared with the mediæval Constitutions, and with the regulations and obligations of the modern Lodges.

That this comparison of the older and the newer Constitutions may be more conveniently made, it will be necessary to anticipate the order of events in regard to dates and times, and to present the reader the ordinances of two Craft Gilds, both of the 14th century.

The first of these Constitutions, though the date affixed to it makes it apparently sixty years later than the second, was really much older. Toulmin Smith says that "the internal evidence shows that the substance of the ordinances is older than the date given." As, in the beginning, they are said to be ordinances "made and of ancient time assigned and ordained by the founders of the Gild," he supposes that they were first written in Latin, and that what we now have "are the early translation of a lost original with some later additions and alterations."

The document that we shall at this stage present to the reader, and which has been taken from Toulmin Smith's *English Gilds*,

a work containing the rules governing more than one hundred of the old Gilds of England, and published by the Early English Text Society, is the Gild of the Smiths of Chesterfield. This Gild united with that of the Holy Cross of Merchants in 1387. But, as has already been said, the date of its institution must have been much earlier.

GILD OF THE SMITHS OF CHESTERFIELD

(The paragraphs are numbered for convenience in any future reference. There is no numbering in the original.)

1. "This is the agreement of the Masters and brethren of the Gild of Smiths of Chesterfield, worshipping before the greater cross in the nave of the church of All Saints there. The head men are an Elder Father, Dean, Steward and four Burgesses by whose oversight the gild is managed. Lights are to be found and to be burnt before the cross on days named.

2. "If any brother is sick and needs help, he shall have a halfpenny daily from the common fund of the gild until he has got well. If any of them fall into want they shall go, singly, on given days, to the houses of the brethren where each shall be courteously received, and there shall be given to him, as if he were the Master of the house, whatever he wants of meat, drink and clothing, and he shall have a halfpenny like those that are sick, and then he shall go home in the name of the Lord.

3. "On the death of a brother twelve lights shall be kept burning round the body, until buried, and offerings shall be made. Round the body of a stranger or of the son of a brother, dying in the house of a brother, four lights shall be kept burning.

4. "If it befall that any of the brethren, by some hapless chance, and not through his own folly, is cast into prison, all his brethren are bound to do what they can to get him freed and to defend him.

5. "If any sick brother makes a will, having first assigned or set apart by bequest his soul to God, his body to burial and the altar gifts to the priests, he shall then not forget to leave something to the gild according to his means.

6. "Whenever any one has borrowed any money from the gild, either to traffic with or for his own use, under promise to

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repay it on a given day, and he does not repay it, though three times warned, he shall be put under suspension, denunciation and excommunication — all contradiction, cavil and appeal aside — until he shall have wholly paid it. If he has been sick, the claim of the gild must be first to be satisfied. And if he dies intestate, without leaving a lawful will, his goods shall be held bound to the gild, to pay what is owing to it, and shall not be touched or disposed of until full payment has been made to the gild.

7. "Should it happen [which God forbid], that any brother is stubborn and unruly; or sets himself against the brethren; or gainsays any of these ordinances; or being summoned to a feast will not come; or does not obey the Elder Father when he ought nor show him due respect; or does not abide by what has been ordained by the Elder Father and greater part of the gild; he shall pay a pound of wax and half a mark. Moreover he shall be put under suspension, denunciation and excommunication, without any contradiction, cavil or appeal.

8. "Any one proved to be in debt, or a wrong-doer, shall be deemed excommunicate or outside the fold, and if he shall presume to come to the meetings of the brethren, his company shall be shunned by all, so that no brother shall dare to talk with him, unless to chide him, until he has fully satisfied the Elder Father and the brethren, as well touching any penalty as touching the debt or wrong doing.

9. "To keep and faithfully perform these constitutions, all the brethren have bound themselves by touch¹ of relics."

Although, as its name suggests, this is the sodality or brotherhood of a body of handicraftsmen, yet there is no reference to any regulations for work. In this respect it more resembles a Social than a Craft Gild. This deficiency is, however, supplied in the ordinances of the Tailors' Gild at Lincoln, which is next to be given. This circumstance is one of the internal evidences that the Smiths' Gild was much older than its charter purports.

The Tailors' was a Craft Gild, and its provisions for the regulation of labor, though few, are striking and may be profitably

¹ A very old practice to give added force to any pledge was for the person while making the promise to solemnly lay the hand upon an object held most sacred. In time the custom was adopted of substituting the Holy Bible or the Gospels for the relics.

compared with the more developed system adopted later by the Masonic Craft Gilds. The date of the institution of the Tailors' Gild is the year 1328. The paragraphs are here numbered for reference, as in the case of the former Gild.

THE TAILORS' GILD AT LINCOLN

1. "All the brethren and sisters shall go in procession in the feast of Corpus Christi.

2. "None shall enter the Gild as whole brother until he has paid his entry, a quarter of barley, which must be paid between Michaelmas and Christmas. And if it is not then paid, he shall pay the price of the best malt as sold in Lincoln Market on Midsummer day. And each shall pay 12 pence to the ale.

3. "If any one of the Gild falls into poverty [which God forbid] and has not the means of support he shall have every week 7 pence out of the goods of the Gild; out of which he must discharge such payments as become due to the Gild.

4. "If any one dies within the city, without leaving the means for burial, the Gild shall find the means according to the rank of him who is dead.

5. "If any one wishes to make pilgrimage to the Holy Land each brother and sister shall give him a penny; and if to St. James or to Rome a halfpenny; and they shall go with him outside the gates of the city of Lincoln, and on his return they shall meet him and go with him to his mother church.

6. "If a brother or sister dies outside the city on pilgrimage or elsewhere, and the brethren are assured of his death they shall do for his soul what would have been done if he had died in his own parish.

7. "When one of the Gild dies, he shall, according to his means, bequeath 5 shillings or 40 pence or what he will to the Gild.

8. "Every brother and sister coming into the Gild, shall pay to the chaplain as the others do.

9. "There shall be four mornspeeches held in every year, to take order for the welfare of the Gild; and whoever heeds not his summons shall pay two pounds of wax.

10. "If any Master of the Gild takes any one to live with him as an apprentice in order to learn the work of the tailors'

craft, the apprentice shall pay 2 shillings to the Gild or his Master for him, or else the Master shall lose his Gildship.

11. "If any quarrel or strife arises between any brethren or sisters of the Gild [which God forbid], the brethren and sisters shall with the advice of the Graceman and Wardens do their best to make peace between the parties, provided the case is such as can be thus settled without a breach of the law. And whoever will not obey the judgment of the brethren shall lose his Gildship, unless he thinks better of it within three days, and then he shall pay a stone of wax, unless he have grace.

12. "On feast days, the brethren and the sisters shall have three flagons and six tankards with prayers and the ale in the flagons shall be given to the poor who most need it. After the feast, a Mass shall be said and offerings made for the souls of those who are dead.

13. "Four lights shall be put round the body of any dead brother or sister until burial and the usual services and offerings shall follow.

14. "If any Master of the Craft keeps any lad or sewer of another Master for one day after he has well known that the lad wrongly left his Master, and that they had not parted in a friendly and reasonable manner he shall pay a stone of wax.

15. "If any Master of the Craft employs any lad as a sewer, that sewer shall pay 5 pence or his Master for him.

16. "Each brother and sister shall every year give 1 penny for charity when the Dean of the Gild demands it, and it shall be given in the place where the giver thinks it most needed together with a bottle of ale from the store of the Gild.

17. "Officers who are elected and will not serve are to pay fines."

It will be seen, on an inspection of these seventeen ordinances, that the Gild of Tailors of Lincoln combined the character of a Religious and a Craft Gild. The 14th and the 15th statutes regulate the conduct of the Masters in the prosecution of their trade, but all the others are appropriate to the regulation of religious services, to the practice of charity, and the inculcation of friendly and fraternal relations among the members.

In process of time the Craft Gilds, without losing altogether their religious features, which have been preserved to this day in

the institution of Speculative Freemasonry, which is descended from them, began to enlarge the number of their ordinances for the regulation of work and workmen. As it will be necessary to give directly a specimen of the old Constitutions of the English Mediæval Freemasons, which were nothing more nor less than ordinances of Masonic Craft Gilds, it will be proper, at the expense of a little repeating and summing, to glance at the progress of these Craft Gilds. Some of the facts will refer equally to the Craft Gilds of the Continent, but only incidentally, as that topic will be treated hereafter as an independent topic. For the present our attention must be directed exclusively to the rise and growth of the English Gilds of Craftsmen.

We have already seen that in the 11th century, and even before, the inhabitants of a town were divided by the officers who governed the municipality, into freemen and bondsmen. To this last class belonged the handicraftsmen who were subjected to the payment of certain taxes and the performance of certain feudal services or such return in a military way as was required of them because of land held on that condition.

But there was also a class of free handicraftsmen who were not, as respects the carrying on of their business, subjected to the same slavish indignities as the bondsmen. As the law made the distinction between the bond and free craftsmen, there was no necessity for the latter to enter into any association for the protection of their rights and privileges. They already formed a part of the governing and law-making power of the municipality, and were thus able to protect themselves.

But by a course of revolutions, which it is unnecessary to detail, the free handicraftsmen lost their place in the general Gild of the citizens. The burghers, freemen of the incorporated towns, then began to feel a desire to subject them to the same imposts or taxes as were paid by the bond craftsmen.¹ These burghers, anxious for the prosperity of their towns, allowed foreigners, on the payment of a fee, to carry on their trade, which of course greatly affected the interests of the free craftsmen, by introducing competition.

This cause naturally brought about the necessity of association for that mutual protection of interests, which could not have

¹ Brentano, "Development of Gilds," p. 115.

been effected if the craftsmen continued in an isolated state. From this there arose the formation of Craft Gilds, which took the suggestion of their form from the older Gilds which had preceded them. Most of these were, however, of a social or religious character.

The Craft Gilds thus founded to restrain the attacks of the burghers on their rights consisted at first, both in England and on the Continent, in France and in Germany especially, of the most eminent of the craftsmen who were free, freedom being an absolutely necessary qualification for admission into the fraternity.

After the bond craftsmen were, by the liberal and humanizing progress of the age, freed from their bondage or servitude, many of them, leaving the companies into which they had been distributed during their slavery by their masters, became members of the Gilds of free craftsmen.

Thus the handicrafts were divided into those who had always been free and those who had originally been bondsmen. The only way in which the hitherto bond craftsman could mingle on equal terms with the free craftsmen was by obtaining admission into and becoming, as it is called, "free of the Gild." This was a high privilege and not easily conceded or obtained.

The free craftsman always held aloof from the craftsman who was not free, the word *free* not being used as the opposite of *bondsman*, but only to mean one who was not a freeman of the Gild and who worked outside of its regulations.

We find that this allusion to freemen of the Gild is constantly used in the old charters. Such expressions as Free Carpenters, Free Weavers, Free Tailors, are not, it is true, to be found on record, though it is not unlikely that they were in conversational use. But in the charter of the Gild of Tailors of Exeter, granted by Edward IV., and the original of which is in the archives of the Corporation of Exeter, whence it was copied by Toulmin Smith,¹ is the following heading of one of the sections of the Ordinances: "The Othe of the Free Brotherys" — i.e., The Oath of the Free Brothers.

"Free Brother" was a recognized expression in the early period of the organization of Craft Gilds, to mean one who was a

¹ "English Gilds," in Early English Text Society Publications, p. 318.

freeman of the Gild. The workers in stone appear to have preserved the use of the term with great care, and used the term "Freemason" to distinguish those who were free of the Gild from those "rough layers" or "cowans" who had not been admitted to the privileges of the fraternity and with whom they were forbidden to work.

In every Masonic Constitution that has been preserved is the ordinance that "no Mason shall make any mould, square, or rules to any rough layer." The Freemason could not, by the laws of the Gild, engage in labor with one who was not free.

We thus trace the source of the word "Freemason," used now exclusively to indicate the member of a Lodge of Speculative Freemasons, but originally to denote a stonecutter who was free of his Gild.

We think this explanation much better than that which traces the origin of the term to the French *Frère Maçon*, or Brother Mason. Such a derivation would necessarily assign the birth of the English Masonic Gilds to a French parentage, a theory not only wholly unsupported by historical authority, but actually in contradiction to it. Indeed, the French themselves have rejected the idea, for they call a Freemason not a "Frère Maçon," or Brother Mason, but a "Franc Maçon," *Franc* being the old French for *free*.

At first the Craft Gilds were voluntary associations acting jointly by general freewill and accord among the members. They could enforce their regulations only by the common consent of the members, but as in time some of these, unwilling to submit to the restrictions laid upon them, would withdraw and carry on their trade independently, it was found necessary to obtain the authority from the law of the land to punish such contempt and to protect the interests of the Gilds.

This was effected by an approval of the Gild ordinances by the lord, the citizens, or afterward by the King. In this way arose the charters under which, after the time of Henry I., all the Craft Gilds acted and continued to act to the present day.

This process did not, however, entirely cure the evil, and in the 12th century artisans of several trades and mysteries in London, being unwilling to unite with the incorporated Gilds or being unable to obtain admission into them, erected themselves

into fraternities without the necessary powers of incorporation. These were not recognized by the companies of freemen and were condemned by the king for their unruly proceedings.¹ They were nicknamed the "Adulterine Gilds," and they remind us of the *Collegia illicita*, or unlawful Colleges, among the Romans, as well as of the use of the term "clandestine Lodges" among the modern Speculative Freemasons.

The number of these Adulterine Gilds in the year 1180, was, according to Madox in his *History of the Exchequer*, fourteen, but no Gild of stonemasons is mentioned in the list.

Before going on to a comparison of the statutes, ordinances, or regulations of these early Gilds with the Masonic constitutions contained in the Old Records of the Order, it will be proper to survey and sum up briefly the condition and character of these Saxon and Norman Craft Gilds. We have said on a former occasion, and here repeat the assertion, that an investigation of the usages of these Mediæval Gilds and a comparison of their regulations with the old Masonic Constitutions will furnish a fertile source of interest to the student of the remains left to us from the early Craftsmen, and will throw much light on the ancient history of Freemasonry.

The custom of meeting on certain stated occasions was one of the most important of the Gild regulations. These meetings of the whole body of the Gild were sometimes monthly, but more generally they were held quarterly. At these meetings all matters concerning the common interests of the Gild were discussed, and the meetings were conducted with certain ceremonies, so as to give solemnity to the occasion. The Gild chest, which was safely fastened by several locks, was opened, and the charter, ordinances, and other valuable articles contained in it were exposed to view, on which occasion all the members uncovered their heads in token of reverence.

The Gild elected its own officers. This was a right peculiar to the English Gilds. On the Continent the presiding officer was frequently appointed by the municipal or other outside authorities.

Of course it is well to point out here that the charter recognition of the Gild by the authorities could also easily include an

¹ Allen, "New History of London," vol. i, p. 61.

oversight of the officers by the town government. Such control is shown by the old oath given in that compilation, dated 1419, of the laws of the City of London found in the *Liber Albus*, or *White Book*, page 451, and which is of great age. Here it is:

OATH OF THE MASTERS AND WARDENS OF THE MYSTERIES

"You shall swear, that well and lawfully you shall overlook the art or mystery of ——— of which you are Masters, or Wardens, for the year elected. And the good rules and ordinances of the same mystery, approved here by the Court, you shall keep and cause to be kept. And all the defaults that you shall find therein, done contrary thereto, you shall present to the Chamberlain of the City, from time to time, sparing no one for favour, and aggrieving no one for hate. Extortion or wrong unto no one, by colour of your office, you shall do; nor unto anything that shall be against the estate and peace of the King, or of the City, you shall consent. But for the time that you shall be in office, in all things pertaining unto the said mystery, according to the good laws and franchises of the said city, well and lawfully you shall behave yourself. — So God you help, and the Saints."

In the early Saxon Gilds, and for some time after the Conquest, the presiding officer was called the "Alderman." At a later period we find him named as the "Graceman," again as the "Early Father," and sometimes by other titles.

At last it became the uniform practice to call the chief officers of the Gild the "Master and Wardens," a usage which has continued ever since to prevail and which was adopted by the Speculative Freemasons.

The Craft Gilds not only directed themselves to the welfare of their worldly concerns, such as the regulation of their trade, which was called a "Mystery," but also took charge of spiritual matters, and for that purpose employed a priest or chaplain, who conducted their religious services and offered up masses or prayers for the dead. In this connection each Gild appears to have had a patron saint, and members of the brotherhood were often connected with a particular church, where, on appointed occasions, they performed special services, and received in return a part in the advantages of all the prayers of the congregation.

Thus they resembled the Roman Colleges of Artificers, which, it will be remembered, were often connected with a particular temple, and the College was dedicated to the God worshipped therein.

Almsgiving was also practiced by the Gild, and while there was a general distribution of food and money to the poor without respect to persons among the poor, special attention was paid to the wants of their own needy members, their widows and orphans.

To support the current expenses of the Gild an entrance-fee was demanded from every one on his admission, and all the members contributed monthly or quarterly a certain sum to the general fund.

The Gild officers dealt out justice among its members, and inflicted punishments for offenses committed against the statutes of the Gild. These punishments consisted of money fines, or of being suspended or even expelled, commonly called excommunication. They discouraged suits at law between the members, and endeavored to settle all disputes, if possible, by arbitration.

Finally, there was an annual festival on the day of the patron saint of the Gild, when the members assembled for religious worship, almsgiving, and feasting. It was deemed an offense for anyone to be absent from this general assembly without a very good excuse.

There was also a ceremony of admission and an oath administered to the candidate on his reception. As these will be of great importance in a comparison of the usages of the Saxon Gilds with the Masonic sodalities, we copy the following form of admission and oath from the charter of St. Catherine's Gild at Stamford. The date of this charter is 1494, but Toulmin Smith observes that there is internal evidence showing that the Gild was established at a much earlier period.

ADMISSION OF BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE GILD OF
ST. CATHERINE

“Then it is ordained that when the said first even-song is done the Alderman and his brethren shall assemble in their hall and drink; and there have a courteous communication for the

weal of the said Gild. And then shall be called forth all those that shall be admitted brethren or sisters of the Gild; and the Alderman shall examine them in this wise: 'Sir or Syse be ye willing to be brethren among us in this Gild and will desire and ask it in the worship of Almighty God, our Blessed Saint Mary and of the Holy Virgin and Martyr Saint Catherine in whose name this Gild is founded and in the way of charity?' And by their own will they shall answer, 'Yea' or 'Nay.' Then the Alderman shall command the Clerk to give this oath to them in form and manner following:

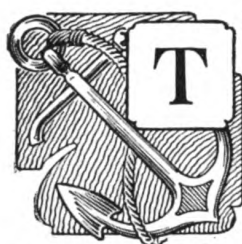
"This hear you, Alderman: I shall true man be to God Almighty, to our Lady Saint Mary, and to that Holy Virgin and Martyr Saint Catherine in whose honor and worship this Gild is founded; and shall be obedient to the Alderman of this Gild and to his successors and come to him and his brethren when I have warning and not absent myself without cause reasonable. I shall be ready at scot and lot¹ and all my duties truly pay and do; the ordinances, constitutions and rules what with the council of the same Gild, keep, obey and perform and to my power maintain to my life's end; so help me God and halidome and by this book.' And then kiss the book and be lovingly received with all the brethren; and then they drink about; and after that depart for that night."

Such is a brief sketch of the principal characteristics of the early Gilds. The main object of presenting it has been to enable the reader to compare these regulations with those of the Old Masonic Constitutions of the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, so as to show the growth and development of the Masonic law from them. It will, for the sake of convenient reference, be therefore necessary to select from these Old Masonic Constitutions one at least, and one of the earliest, that the reader may in making his comparison have the regulations of the Gild and the charges of the Freemasons side by side before him. But this investigation will perhaps be better continued in a separate and following chapter.

¹ Taxes and dues are the meaning of "Scot and lot." We still use "Scotfree," to be without injury.

CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

THE EARLY ENGLISH MASONIC GILDS



O Brother William James Hughan are we indebted, more than to any other person, for the collection and publication of all the Masonic Gild ordinances that have been preserved in the British Museum, in the archives of old Lodges, or in private hands.

In the beginning of his treatise on *The Old Charges of the British Freemasons*, published in 1895 (a book so valuable and so necessary that it should be in the library of every Masonic student), Brother Hughan says:

“Believing as we do that the present Association of Freemasons is an outgrowth of the Building Corporations and Gilds of the Middle Ages, as also a lineal descendant and sole representative of the early, secret Masonic sodalities, it appears to us that their ancient Laws and Charges are specially worthy of preservation, study and reproduction. No collection of these having hitherto been published we have undertaken to introduce several of the most important to the notice of the Fraternity.”

As Brother Hughan is famous for the accuracy and fidelity with which he has personally made, or caused to be made for him by competent scribes, copies of these Constitutions from the originals, we shall select from one of the earliest of them the ordinances or regulations, which shall be compared with those of the early Saxon Gilds, specimens of which have been given in the preceding chapter.

An account of these constitutions and charges or Old Records, as they are sometimes called, will be found in the first part of this work where the subject is treated at length of the *Legend of the Craft*, which they all contain. We will not find it necessary therefore to repeat that discussion and will content ourselves by merely reminding the reader of it.

We might have selected for comparison the statutes contained in the Regius poem published by Halliwell, or those in the Cooke manuscript, as both are of an older date than any in the collection of Brother Hughan. But as they are all substantially the same in their provisions, and the latter have the advantage of greater brevity, we shall only refer occasionally, when required, to the former.

The manuscript which is selected for our first consideration at this stage is that known as the Lansdowne, whose date is supposed to be about 1600. The date of the manuscript is, however, no test of the date of the Gild whose ordinances it recites, for that was of course much older. This manuscript was once thought to be nearest in point of age to the poem published by Halliwell, to which the date of 1390 is given, and Hughan says that "the style of caligraphy or handwriting and other considerations seem to warrant so early a date being ascribed to it." In copying the statutes from the copy published by Brother Hughan, we have made an exact transcript, except that we have numbered all the statutes, one after the other, in their regular order, instead of dividing them, as is done in the original, into two series. This has been done for convenience of comparison with the Gild ordinances inserted in the preceding chapter and which have been numbered in a similar method. The wording of the statutes, for a similar reason, has been modernized.

CHARGES IN THE LANSDOWNE MANUSCRIPT

1. "You shall be true to God and Holy Church and to use no error or heresy, you understanding and by wise men's teaching, also that you shall be loyal men to the King of England without treason or any falsehood and that you know no treason or treachery but that you amend and give knowledge thereof to the King and his Council; also that ye shall be true to one another (that is to say) every Mason of the Craft that is Mason allowed, you shall do to him as you would be done to yourself.

2. "Ye shall keep truly all the counsel of the Lodge or of the chamber and all the counsel of the Lodge that ought to be kept by the way of Masonhood, also that you be no thief nor thieves

to your knowledge free; that you shall be true to the King, Lord or Master that you serve and truly to see and work for his advantage; also you shall call all Masons your Fellows or your Brethren and no other names.

3. "Also you shall not take your Fellow's wife in villainy nor deflower his daughter or servant, nor put him to disworship; also you shall truly pay for your meat or drink wheresoever you go to table or board whereby the Craft or science may be slandered."

These are called "the charges general that belong to every true Mason, both Masters and Fellows." Then follow sixteen others, that are called "charges single for Masons Allowed." The only difference that we can see between the two sets of charges is that the first set refer to the moral conduct of the members of the Gild, while the second refer to their conduct as Craftsmen in the pursuit of their trade. The former were laws common or general to all the Gilds, the latter were peculiar to the Freemasons as a Craft Gild. The second set is as follows:

4. "That no Mason take on him no Lord's work, nor other men's, but if he know himself well able to perform the work, so that the Craft have no slander.

5. "That no Master take work but that he take reasonable pay for it, so that the Lord may be truly served and the Master live honestly and pay his Fellows truly; also that no Master or Fellow supplant others of their work (that is to say) if he have taken a work or else stand Master of a work that he shall not put him out without he be unable of cunning (skill) to make an end of his work; also that no Master nor Fellow shall take no apprentice for less than seven years and that the apprentice be able of birth that is freeborn and of limbs whole as a man ought to be, and that no Mason or Fellow take no allowance to be made Mason without the assent of his Fellows at the least six or seven and that he be made able in all degrees that is freeborn and of a good kindred (meaning, of lawful birth), true and no bondsman and that he have his right limbs as a man ought to have.

6. "Also that a Master take no apprentice without he have occupation sufficient to occupy two or three Fellows at least.

7. "Also that no Master or Fellow put away Lord's work to task that ought to be journey work.

8. "Also that every Master give pay to his Fellows and servants as they may deserve, so that he be not defamed with false working.

9. "Also that none slander another behind his back to make him lose his good name.

10. "That no Fellow in the house or abroad answer another ungodly or reprovably without cause.

11. "That every Master Mason reverence his elder; also that a Mason be no common player at the dice, cards or hazard nor at any other unlawful plays through the which the science and Craft may be dishonored.

12. "That no Mason use no lechery (sexual sin) nor have been abroad whereby the Craft may be dishonored or slandered.

13. "That no Fellow go into the town by night except he have a Fellow with him who may bear record that he was in an honest place.

14. "Also that every Master and Fellow shall come to the Assembly if it be within fifty miles of him if he have any warning and if he have trespassed against the Craft to abide the award of the Masters and Fellows.

15. "Also that every Master Mason and Fellow that have trespassed against the Craft shall stand in correction of other Masters and Fellows to make him accord and if they can not accord to go to the common law.

16. "Also that a Master or Fellow make not a mould stone square nor rule to no lowen nor set no lowen work within the Lodge nor without to no mould stone.¹

17. "Also that every Mason receive or cherish strange Fellows when they come over to the country and set them on work if they will work as the manner is (that is to say) if the Mason have any mould stone in his place on work and if he have none the Mason shall refresh him with money unto the next Lodge.

¹ The Freemason must not make for one who is not a member of the Gild a mould or pattern stone as a guide for construction of mouldings or ornaments, whereby he would be giving up to him the secrets of the Craft. The word "lowen," which is very rarely if ever applied as here given, is supposed to be the writer's error for "cowan." It is just as probable that it is a mistake for "layer," a word used in other manuscripts and meaning a "rough mason." The stone-mason and the brick-layer are at this day separate trades. But whether the correct word be "cowan" or "layer," the object of the law was the same, namely, that a member of the Gild should not work with one who was not a member of that body.

18. "Also that every Mason shall truly serve his Master for his pay.

19. "Also that every Master shall truly make an end of his work task or journey which soever it be."

Now, in the comparison of these "Charges" with the ordinances of the early Gilds we will find very many points of striking resemblance, showing the common prevalence of the Gild spirit of religion, charity, and brotherly love in each, and confirming the opinion of Hughan, and the theory which has been constantly advanced, that the one was an outgrowth of the other.

The religious spirit which was a feature of all the Gilds is here shown in the first statute, which requires the Freemason to be true to the Church and to use no error or heresy.

The charge in the second statute, to keep the counsel of the Lodge, is met with in nearly all the Gild ordinances. Thus in the ordinances of the Shipmen's Gild, of the date of 1368, it is said:

"Whoso discovereth the counsel of the Gild of this fraternity to any strange man or woman and it may have been proved . . . shall pay to the light two stone of wax or shall lose (forfeit) the fraternity till he may have grace. That is he shall be suspended from the Gild until restored by a pardon."

The same regulation is found in the ordinances of several other Gilds, whose charters have been copied by Toulmin Smith. In those of the Gild of St. George the Martyr, dated 1376, there is no option or choice afforded of a fine as the penalty for such wrongdoing. The words of the statute are that "no brother nor sister shall discover the counsel of this fraternity to no stranger on the pain of forfeiture of the fraternity forevermore." Nothing short of absolute expulsion was meted out to the betrayer of Gild secrets.

In the "Charges of a Free Mason," said to be "extracted from the ancient Records," published by Anderson in 1723, and adopted by the Grand Lodge, soon after the Revival, for the government of the Speculative Freemasons, this principle of the Gilds has been preserved. It is there said, in Charge VI., sec. 5, that the Freemason is "not to let his family, friends, and neighbors know the concerns of the Lodge." To this very day it is an almost un-

pardonable crime to disclose the secrets of the Lodge. The spirit of the Gild has been preserved in its successor, the modern Lodge.

The prohibition in the fourth charge, to dishonor a brother, or "put him to disworship," is found in the earliest of the Gilds. That of Orky, for example, prescribes a punishment to any member who "misgretes," that is, greets improperly, insults, abuses, or injures another member. The Gild was always careful to preserve a feeling of brotherly love and harmony among its members, a disposition which is also the characteristic of the Masonic fraternity. Hence we find the tenth statute, or "point," of these Masonic charges declaring that "none shall slander another behind his back." But the very language of the fourth statute of the charges would appear to have been borrowed from the ordinances of some of the Gilds.

In those of the Gild of the Holy Trinity, whose date is 1377, we meet with these statutes:

"No one of the Gild shall do anything to the loss or hurt of another, nor allow it to be done so far as he can hinder it, the laws and customs of the town of Lancaster being always saved.

"No one of the Gild shall wrong the wife or daughter or sister of another, nor shall allow her to be wronged, so far as he can hinder it."

From the fifth to the twentieth charge, the regulations principally relate to the government of the Craft in their work. There is some difficulty in comparing these with the early Craft Gilds, from the lack of charters of the latter which have been preserved. But wherever there are any points common to both, the analogy or resemblance between the two is at once detected.

Thus in the charter of the Gild of Fullers at Lincoln, which Gild was begun in 1297, it is said that "none of the Craft shall work at the wooden bar (full cloth), with a woman, unless with the wife of a Master or his handmaid."

Toulmin Smith says that he can not explain this rule. But it was in fact only an effort of the Gild spirit common to all the Craft Gilds, which forbade one who was a member or freeman of the Gild from working with another who was not a member.

The Gild of the Tailors of Exeter had an ordinance that "no one shall have a board or shop of the Craft unless free of the

city." And in the charter of the Gild of Tylers or Poyntours (layers of tiles or pointers of walls) of Lincoln it is said that "no Tyler or Poyntour shall stay in the city unless he enters the Gild."

The same spirit of social and trade restraint and control is shown in the seventeenth statute of the Masonic Constitutions, which forbids a Master or Fellow from working with a Cowan, or one who was not a "Mason Allowed," that is to say, one who has been admitted into the fraternity or Gild.

This exclusion from having a part or share in labor of all who were not members of the fraternity was a regulation common to all the Craft Gilds, but was perhaps more fully developed and more stringently urged in the Constitution of the Masonic Gild than in those of any of the others. It is from this principle of reserve that the modern Lodges of Speculative Freemasonry have derived their strict regulation of holding no communication with Freemasons who have not been "duly initiated," or with Lodges which have not been "legally constituted."

Contempt, rebellion, or disobedience to the laws of the Craft or of the Gild was severely punished. The ordinances of the Smiths' Gild of Chesterfield prescribed that any brother who is "contumacious (unruly) or sets himself against the brethren or gainsays any of these ordinances" shall be suspended, denounced, and excommunicated. A similar regulation is to be found in other Gilds.

According to the Lansdowne Statutes, a Freemason is required to be true to every member of the Craft, and to reverence his elder or superior, and in the points of the statutes of the Masonic Gild, as set forth in the Halliwell or Regius manuscript, it is said that the Freemason must be "true and steadfast to all these ordinances wheresoever he goes."

Suits at law between the members were discouraged and forbidden, except as a last resort, in all the Saxon Gilds.

The Shipmen's Gild provided that the Alderman (or Master) and the other members should do their best to adjust a quarrel, but if they were unable, then the Alderman should give them leave "to make their suit at common law."

In the Gild of the Holy Cross it was declared that no brother or sister of the Gild should go to law for a debt or a trespass

until he had asked leave of the Alderman and of the men of the Gild.

The Statutes of the Gild of St. John the Baptist, adopted in 1374, are very clear on this point. There it is said that a member "can not sue until he has shown his grievance to the Alderman and Gild brethren that are chief of the Council," and it adds that "the Alderman and the Gild brethren shall try their best to make them agree; and if they can not agree they may make their complaint in what place they will."

The same provision is met with in all the Constitutions of the Masonic Gild. The earliest of them, the Regius manuscript, prescribes in case of a dispute a "love-day," or arbitration. The Lansdowne says that when a wrong is done by one of the members to another, the other Masters and Fellows must try to make them agree, and if they can not agree they may then "go to the common law," which is the very expression used in the Shipmen's Gild above cited.

We must note it as a very strong proof of the connection between the early Gilds and the modern Lodges that this unwillingness to permit the brethren to carry their personal disputes out of the Craft and into the publicity of the courts was fully developed in the "Charges of the Speculative Masons," adopted in 1723. In these it is said, in the true spirit of the old Gilds to which Speculative Freemasonry succeeded, that, "with respect to Brothers or Fellows at law, the Master and Brethren should kindly offer their mediation, which ought to be thankfully accepted by the contending brethren; but if that submission is impracticable, they must, however, carry on their process or lawsuit without wrath and rancor."

There is no need to extend these comparisons. Sufficient has been done to show that there is a close resemblance in their mode of organization, method of action, constitution, and spirit between the Saxon Gilds and the modern Masonic Lodges, which actually are, under another name, only Masonic Gilds. This likeness indicates an historical connection between the two, and this connection may be more closely traced through the local companies of London and other cities of England. That these latter were the direct offshoot from the former is a fact generally admitted by writers on the subject, and of it there can be no doubt. "In

the Trade Gilds," says Thorpe, "we may see the origin of our civic companies."¹

To these civic companies, and to one of them particularly, the Masons' Company in Basinghall Street, London, the reader's attention must be invited.

¹ "Diplomatarium Anglicum Ævi Saxonici," Preface, p. xvi.

CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

THE LONDON COMPANIES AND THE MASONS' COMPANY



ABOUT the middle of the 14th century, perhaps a little earlier, and in the reign of Edward III., the various trades began to be reconstituted under the name of Livery¹ Companies and to change their name from Gilds to Crafts and Mysteries. There was, however, very little real difference between their new and their old organization, and the Gild spirit of fraternity remained the same.

There has been a difference of opinion as to the meaning of the word "Mystery," which was applied to these companies in such phrases as "the Mystery of the Tailors," or "the Mystery of the Saddlers."

Herbert says that the preservation of their trade-secrets was a leading law of all the fraternities, and continued their first requirement as long as they remained actual "working companies," whence arose the names of "Mysteries" and "Crafts," by which they were for so many ages known.²

This derivation is a reasonable one, especially when we remember that the word "craft," which was always associated with the word "mystery" in its first use, signified art, knowledge, or skill.

This explanation has not been universally accepted, and the word "Mystery," in its application to a trade or handicraft, has more generally been derived from the old or Norman French, where *mestière* was used to denote a craft, art, or employ-

¹ "Livery," meaning uniform or clothing, a reference to the special form of dress by which the members were known just as is the case now with Freemasons, the apron being an essential element of the clothing of the Craft.

² "History of the Twelve Great Livery Companies of London," by William Herbert, vol. i, p. 45.

ment.¹ There is no certainty, however, that the word was not employed to denote the trade-secrets of a Gild or Company, as Herbert suggests. If *mestière* denoted, in old French, a trade, *mestre* meant, in the same language, a mystery, and the former word may have been derived from the latter. But the modern Freemasons, in borrowing the word "Mystery" from the old companies, where they find their origin, undoubtedly use it in the sense of something hidden or concealed.²

The origin of the livery and other companies out of the earlier Gilds is a matter of historical record.

Gilds, as we have already shown, existed in England from a very early period. But, as all tradesmen and artificers did not belong to Gilds, or, if they did, often acted irregularly in buying and selling a variety of wares or working in different handicrafts, a petition was presented to Parliament in the year 1355, because of which it was ordered that all artificers and "people of mysteries" should choose forthwith each his own mystery, and, having chosen it, should for the future use and belong to none other.

Right here we may assign the origin of the chartered companies, many of which exist to the present day. Among these bodies we shall find at a later period the Masons' Company, which was the direct predecessor of the Freemasons' Lodges, both of the Operative before and the Speculative after the beginning of the 18th century.

In a document found in the records of the City of London, of the date of 1364, and which has been published by Herbert,³ we find the names of the principal if not the whole of the city companies which were in existence in that year. This statement is an account, in Latin, of the sums received by the city chamberlain

¹ Bro. Edward Conder, Jun., in his "Records of the Hole Crafte and Fellowship of Masons," 1894, p. 48, says "This word 'mystery,' sometimes erroneously written 'mystery,' is derived from the Norman-French word *mestière* or *métière*, a trade or calling."

² Halliwell's "Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words," p. 556, 4th edition, London, 1860, says "Mister" is Anglo-Norman for kind, species, trade, occupation, manner of life. He adds the following: "Hence *mistery*, an art or trade, a company or gild of traders." At a time when the practice of trade or profession was conducted with every secrecy as to method, conducted and taught with every privacy and reserve, oathbound and marked by the dignity of special charter from Government whether local or national as the source of authority might be, then the word "mystery" in modern or ancient meaning is certainly very apt as a name.

³ "History of the Twelve Great Livery Companies," vol. i, p. 80.

from those companies as gifts to the King, to aid him in carrying on the war with France.

The list records the names of thirty-two companies. Though we find several Craft Gilds, such as the Tailors, the Glovers, the Armorers, and the Goldsmiths, there is no mention of a Gild or Company of Masons or Freemasons. Whether such a body did not then exist as a chartered company, or whether, if in existence, it was too poor to make a donation, which seems to have been a voluntary act, are questions which the document gives us no means of deciding.

Five years afterwards, in 1369, a law was enacted by the municipal authorities of London, which must have tended to favor the organization of these Companies. By this law the right of election of all city dignitaries, and all officers, including members of Parliament, was transferred from the representatives of the wards, who had heretofore exercised this franchise, to the trading companies. A few members of each of these were selected by the Masters and Wardens, who were to go to the Gildhall for election purposes. This right has ever since remained, with some later changes, in the twelve Livery Companies of London.

The effect of this law toward increasing the number of Companies very speedily showed itself. From a list in Norman French of the "number of persons chosen by the several mysteries to be the Common Council" in the year 1370, it appears that the Companies had increased from thirty-two to forty-eight.

In this list we find the seventeenth to be the *Company of Freemasons*, and the thirty-fourth the *Company of Masons*. The former appears to have been a more select, or at least a smaller, Company than the latter, for while the Masons sent four members to the Common Council the Freemasons sent only two. Afterwards the two Companies were merged into one, that of the Masons, to which we shall again refer at a later stage of our discussion.

The constitution and government of these Companies appear to have been framed very much after the model of the earlier Gilds.

They had the power of making their own by-laws or ordinances, and of enforcing the observance of these rules among their members. These ordinances were called "Points." The word is first used in the charters of Edward III., who wills that

the said ordinances shall be kept and maintained *en touz pointz*, or "in all points." We find the same word in the *Constituciones Geometric* in the Regius manuscript, where the ordinances are divided into fifteen articles and fifteen points. It is also met with in all the later constitutions.

As a technical term the word is preserved in the Speculative Freemasonry of to-day, whose obligations of duty are to be obeyed by initiates into the fraternity in all their "arts, parts, and points." These little incidents serve to show the unbroken succession of our modern Lodges from the early Gilds and the later Companies which were formed out of them. They are therefore worthy of special notice in a history of the rise and progress of Freemasonry.

We have seen that in the most of the Saxon Gilds the principal officer was called the Alderman. After the Gilds were chartered as Companies, the chief officers received the title of Masters and Wardens, titles that are still retained in the government of Masonic Lodges.

The ordinances required that there should be held four meetings in every year to treat of the common business of the Company. These were the quarterly meetings to which reference is made by Dr. Anderson when, in his *History of the Revival of Masonry*, in the year 1717, he says that "the quarterly communication of the officers of the Lodges" was revived.

The regulation of apprentices formed an important part of the system pursued by the Companies. No one was admitted to the freedom or livery of any Company unless he had first served an apprenticeship, a period of time which was generally for seven years. Even then the apprentice could not be admitted into the fellowship except with the consent of the members. Masters were not permitted to take more than a certain number of apprentices, lest the trade or art should be overstocked with workmen and the journeymen or fellows find less opportunity for employment.

Care was taken that one member should not undersell another member, or work for a less amount of pay or interfere with his contracts for labor. It was the duty of the Company to protect the interests of all alike.

There were wise rules for the settlement of disputes between the members, so as to avoid the necessity of a resort to law. The

spirit of the early Gild was in this respect followed exactly. "If any debate is between any of the fraternity," says an ordinance of one of these Companies, "for misgovernance of words or asking of debt or any other things, then anon (without delay) the party plaintiff shall come to the Master and tell his grievance and the Master shall make an end thereof."¹

To speak disrespectfully of the Company; to strike or insult a brother member; to violate the regulations for clothing or dress; to employ or work with men who were not free of the Company, and who were generally designated as "foreigners," or to commit any kind of fraud in carrying on the trade or handicraft, were all offenses for which the ordinances provided ample punishment.

The feeling of brotherly love exhibited in charity to a poor or distressed member prevailed in all the Companies. When a member became poor from misfortune or sickness, he was to be assisted out of the common fund.

All of these regulations will be found copied in the Old Constitutions of the Operative Freemasons, a fact which proves beyond all doubt that they were originally formed into a Company following the general usage which had been adopted by the other Companies, whether Commercial or Craft, such as the Grocers, the Mercers, the Goldsmiths, or the Tailors.

The subject of "Liveries" is one that will be interesting to the Speculative Freemason, from the rule with which he is familiar, that a Craftsman, on entering his Lodge, must be "properly clothed." The word "clothing" here indicates the dress which he should wear, especially and imperatively including his "lamb-skin apron."

We have the very important and entirely trustworthy evidence of the fact that secret societies existed in the 14th century, marked by all the peculiarities we have seen distinguishing the English Companies.

In the year 1326 the Council of Avignon issued what has been called the "Statute of Excommunications," its title being "Concerning the Societies, Unions and Confederacies called Confraternities, which are to be utterly extirpated or wiped out."

¹ "Ordinances of the Company of Grocers," for the year 1463.

This statute is contained in Hardouin's immense collection of the Acts of Councils.¹ The following statement is a part of the introduction, and it shows very clearly that the Roman Catholic Church at that time recognized and condemned the existence of those Gilds, Companies, or Societies for mutual help, some of which were the forerunners of the modern Masonic Lodges, against which the Romish Church exhibits to this day the same enmity.

The statute passed at Avignon begins as follows:

"Whereas, in certain parts of our provinces, noblemen for the most part, and sometimes other persons have established unions, societies and confederacies, which are forbidden by the canon as well as by the municipal laws, who meet in some place once a year, under the name of a fraternity, and there establish assemblies and unions and enter into a compact confirmed by an oath that they will mutually aid each other against all persons whomsoever, their own lords excepted, and in every case, that each one will give to another, help, counsel and favor; and sometimes *all wearing a similar dress* with certain curious signs or marks, they elect one of their number as chief to whom they swear obedience in all things."

The edict of the Council then goes on to condemn these fraternities, and to forbid all persons to have any connection with them under the penalty of excommunication, being expelled from the Church. Here again is a pointed reference to the subject of livery:

"They shall not institute fraternities of this kind; one shall not give obedience nor afford assistance or favor to another; nor shall they *wear clothing which exhibits the signs or marks of the condemned thing.*"

That the Freemasons of the Middle Ages wore a particular dress when at work, which was the same in all countries, is evident from the pictures in several illuminated manuscripts from the 10th to the 16th centuries, copies of which have been inserted by Wright in his essay on mediæval architecture.² The dress of the Freemasons in all these pictures, whether in England, in France, or in Italy, is similar.

¹ "Acta Conciliorum et Epistolæ Decretales æ Constitutiones Summorum Pontificum," Paris, 1714, tome vii, p. 1, 507.

² "Essays on Archæological Subjects," by Thomas Wright, vol. ii, pp. 129-250.

"In reviewing and comparing these various representations," says Wright, "of the same process at so widely distinct periods, we are struck much less with their diversity than with the close resemblance between both workmen and tools, which continues amid the continual, and sometimes rapid, changes in the condition and manners of society. Whether this be in any measure to be attributed to the circumstance of the Masons forming a permanent society among themselves, which transmitted its doctrines and fashions unchanged from father to son, it is not very easy to determine."¹

The question is not, however, of so difficult a solution as Wright supposes, when we see that every Gild or Company of tradesmen or artificers had its form of dress peculiar to itself, which was called its "livery." The Freemasons, as a Company, followed the custom and adopted their own livery or clothing. The modern Speculative Freemasons preserve the memory of the old practice by declaring that none shall enter a Lodge or join in its labors unless he is "properly clothed"; that is, he must wear the uniform or the livery of the fraternity.

According to the authority of Stow, in his *Survey of London*, liveries are not mentioned as having been worn before the reign of Edward I., or about the beginning of the 14th century. That is, they were then first licensed at that time or mentioned in the charters of the Companies, but he admits that they had assumed them before that time without such authority. This fact is confirmed by the illustrated manuscripts to which allusion has been made above, which show that the Freemasons used a special clothing as far back as the 10th century.

In the "Statute of Excommunications," passed in the beginning of the 14th century by the Council of Avignon, societies or fraternities are denounced which had been established for mutual aid, and which are described as "all wearing a similar dress with certain curious signs or marks."

About the middle of the 14th century there began a separation between the rich and the poor Companies, which ended after a long strife in shutting out from the municipal government of all except what are now called "The Twelve Great Livery Companies," namely, the Companies of Mercers, Grocers, Drapers,

¹ See the above work by Wright, p. 136.

Fishmongers, Goldsmiths, Skinners, Merchant Tailors, Haberdashers, Salters, Ironmongers, Vintners, and Clothworkers. These Companies, noted for their riches, political power and commercial strength from the minor Companies, which were often only voluntary associations of men of the same trade or craft, were called the "substantial companies," the "principal crafts," the "chief mysteries," and other similar titles which were intended to show their superiority, though many of the so-called "minor companies," as the weavers and bakers, were really of greater age, and of more public utility and importance.

Among these "minor companies," the one of especial importance to the present inquiry is the "Masons' Company."

Of this Company, Stow gives the following account in his *Survey of London*:

"The Masons, otherwise termed free masons, were a society of ancient standing and good reckoning, by means of affable and kind meetings divers times and as a loving brotherhood should use to do, did frequent their mutual assemblies in the time of King Henry IV. in the 12th year (1411) of whose most gracious reign they were incorporated."

A fuller account of the Company is given by R. Chiswell in the *New View of London*, printed in 1708, in the following words:

"Masons' Company was incorporated about the year 1410, having been called the *Free Masons*, a fraternity of great account, who have been honored by several Kings, and very many of the Nobility and Gentry being of their Society. They are governed by a Master, 2 Wardens, 25 Assistants, and they are 65 on the Livery.

"Their armorial ensigns are, Azure (but this seems to be an error. Sable, black rather than blue, will be seen later to have the preference), on a Chevron Argent, between 3 Castles Argent, a pair of Compasses, somewhat extended, on the first Crest, a Castle of the 2nd."¹

Before we go further let us warn the reader against making the mistake that the granting of a charter began the organization. Brother Conder comments on the assertion of Stow as follows:

"This statement is correct only so far as showing that the Company was in existence at that date, and we must not fall into

¹ Chiswell's "New View of London," vol. ii, p. 611.

the error that has been so often made, that the Company was *founded* at that time; indeed the evidence that is to be found in the Corporation Records at Guildhall prove very clearly that in 1375 the Masons' Company existed and was represented on the court of Common Council; and it is also recorded that as early as 1356, rules for the guidance of the masons of London were passed before the Mayor, Aldermen and Sheriffs of London.

"In the absence therefore of documentary evidence, it is more than probable that the masons at that early date were a company by prescription (authority); and that they had their ordinances and by-laws passed and sanctioned from time to time by the Court of Aldermen."¹

Brother Conder on the same page says that the foundation of the Company may be placed about 1220, "if not earlier."

The Hall of the Company, in which they held their meetings, was "situated in Masons Alley in Basinghall street as you pass to Coleman street."²

W. Maitland, who published his *London and its Environs* in 1761, gives a later date for the charter. He says that "this Company had their arms granted by Clarencieux, King-at-Arms, in 1477, though the members were not incorporated by letters patent till they obtained them from King Charles II. in 1677."³

Brother Conder gives 1472 as the date of the grant of arms.⁴

The conflict in dates between Stow, with whom Chiswell agrees, and Maitland, the former ascribing the charter of the Company to Henry IV., and the latter to Charles II., was reconciled by Brother Mackey in supposing that the original charter of Henry was submitted to a review and confirmation, which was technically called an "*inspeximus*," an act which we constantly meet with in old charters. In other words, the Freemasons first received a charter for their Company from Henry IV., which charter was confirmed by Charles II.

These Companies of traders and craftsmen were not confined to London, but were to be found in other cities. The Freemasons, however, do not appear to have always maintained a sep-

¹ "Hole Craft and Fellowship of Masons," pp. 53-54.

² Chiswell's "New View of London," vol. ii, p. 611.

³ "London and its Environs," vol. iv, p. 304.

⁴ See page 83 of his "Hole Craft and Fellowship of Masons."

arate organization, but seem sometimes to have united with other craftsmen. Thus among the thirteen Companies which were incorporated in the city of Exeter, the thirteenth consisted of the Painters, Joiners, Carpenters, Freemasons, and Glaziers, who were jointly chartered as a Company in 1602. It may be remarked that all of these crafts were connected in the employment of building. Each, however, had its separate arms, that of the Freemasons being described by Izacke in his *Antiquities of Exeter* thus: "Sable, on a chevron between 3 towers argent, a pair of Compasses, dilated (spread out), Sable."¹

This will be an appropriate place to examine this subject of the Masonic Arms as historically connecting the Operative Craft with the Speculative Grand Lodge.

According to Stow, the Arms of the "Craft and Fellowship of Masons" of London were granted to them by William Hawkeslowe, Clarencieux King-of-Arms in the twelfth year of Edward IV., that is, in 1473, and were later confirmed by Thomas Benott, Clarencieux King-of-Arms in the twelfth year of Henry VIII., or in 1521. These arms, which are blazoned or pictured in the original grant, now in the British Museum, are as follows: "Sable, on a chevron, engrailed argent between 3 castles of the second, with doors and windows of the field, a pair of compasses extended of the first." Translating the technical language of heraldry, the arms may be plainly described as a silver or white scalloped chevron, a V-shaped band, between three white castles with black doors and windows on a black field or background, and on the chevron a pair of compasses of a black color. Woodford says that these arms are supposed to have been adopted by the Grand Lodge of Speculative Freemasons in 1717. Kloss gives the same arms, except that the chevron is not scalloped (engrailed), but plain, as the seal of the Grand Lodge of England in 1743 and in 1767. The arms adopted by the Grand Lodge of England at the union in 1813, and still used, consist of a combination of the old Operative arms (the colors being, however, changed) with those of the Athol Grand Lodge. But as the latter arms were most probably an invention of Dermott, the Grand Secretary, they are of no other historical value.

¹ "Remarkable Antiquities of the City of Exeter." By Richard Izacke, heretofore chamberlain thereof. Second edition, London, 1724, p. 68.

From all this we see, so far as heraldry throws a light on history, that the English Speculative Freemasons have to the present day claimed to deduce their origin from the Operative Freemasons who were incorporated as a Company in the 15th century. They claimed to be their heirs, and according to the law of heraldry assumed their arms.

The reader may note here that in some instances the clothing of the Companies was taken from the coats of arms granted to the gilds. As Brother Conder suggests, the Freemasons' livery or clothing would in that case be black and white.

To resume the subject of the Masons' Companies, we have no records of the existence of those organizations under that name in more than a few places in England.

But the Freemasons seem often to combine with other Gilds for purposes of convenience. Several instances of this kind occur in old records, as in an addition to the charter of the Gild of Carpenters of Norwich, begun in 1375, where it is stated that "Robert of Elfyngthem, Masoun, and certeyn Masouns of Norwiche" had given two torches or lights for the altar of Christ's Church at Norwich. That church was the place where the Carpenters' Gild celebrated their mass. As the fact of the contribution is noted in their charter, it is reasonable to suppose that the Masons, having no Gild or Company of their own in Norwich, had united in religious services with the Carpenters.

The impossibility of obtaining any continuous record of the transactions of the Masons' Company, which was one of the forty Companies of London mentioned by Stow, must render many of the deductions which may be drawn from certain portions of the Harleian manuscript altogether guesswork. The probability or correctness of the supposition will have to be determined by the reason and judgment of the reader.

The Masonic public has in its possession at this day, and easily accessible by any student, about eighty documents printed from manuscripts ranging in date from the end of the 14th to the beginning of the 18th century.¹ These documents are usually named the "Masonic Constitutions." A very few of them were

¹ A list of 78 of these documents, giving the titles, dates, owners, and when and where they have appeared in print, is given in the Mackey-Hughan-Hawkins "Encyclopedia of Freemasonry." Refer to pp. 464-467.

known to Dr. Anderson, and he has given inaccurate quotations from them in both of his editions of the *Book of Constitutions*. But for the greater number, new until a recent period, to the world, we are indebted to the researches of Masonic students, by whose unpaid industry they have been unearthed, as we may say, from the shelves of the British Museum, from the archives of old Lodges, or from the libraries of private collectors.

Although we possess transcripts of these Constitutions correctly made from the original manuscripts, there is nothing on record to tell us definitely by whom they were written, nor under what authority. Internal evidence alone assures that they are all, except perhaps the very oldest of them, copies of some original not yet found, and that they contain the legend or traditional history of Freemasonry which was believed and the laws and regulations which were obeyed by the Operative Freemasons from the 15th to the 18th century, if not for some centuries before.

To make any progress in our researches as to the source whence they have come and for what purpose they were written, we must repeat in a concise form what little we know of the history of the Masons' Company of London.

The Masons' Company was incorporated, according to Chiswell and the other authorities, in the 15th century by King Henry IV., which charter was renewed by Charles II. in the 17th century, we suppose by an "*inspeximus*" or confirmation of the original charter, as was usual.

But we know from the list contained in the records of the City of London, and published by Herbert, which has already been referred to, that in the year 1376, in the reign of Edward III., there were in London a Company of Freemasons and a Company of Masons, the former of which sent two and the latter four members to the Common Council of the city. These two were wholly distinct from each other, but Stow tells us that at a later period they united together and from that time onward acted as one Company.

What was the difference between these two Companies, is a question that will naturally be asked, and one which can not very easily be answered.

Brother Mackey held the opinion, and it is not at all unlikely, that the Company of Freemasons was the representative in Eng-

land of that body of Traveling Freemasons who had spread, under the auspices and favor of the Church, over every country of Europe, and whose history will constitute hereafter an important portion of the present work; while the Company of Masons was the representative of the general body of the Craft in the kingdom, who had formed themselves into a Gild, Company, Sodality or Brotherhood, just as the Mercers, the Grocers, the Tailors, the Painters, and other merchants and mechanics had done at the same period. The two companies were, however, afterward merged into one, which retained the title of "The Company of Masons."

Each of the Trade and Craft Gilds or Companies kept a book in which was contained its ordinances and a record of its transactions. The language of these books was at first the Norman-French; sometimes, says Herbert, mixed with a sort of Latin, or the old English of Chaucer's day. Afterward, during the reign of Henry V., and by his influence, the ordinances were translated into the common language of the period, and the books of the Companies were thereafter written in English.

We find just such changes in the dialect of the old Masonic Constitutions from the out-of-date and, to unused ears, almost foreign style of the Halliwell or Regius poem to the modern English of the later manuscripts.

If the Masons' Company had had an historian like Herbert who would have given a detailed history of its transactions from its origin, as he has done in respect to the twelve Livery Companies of London, we should have had no difficulty in defining the true character of the Old Constitutions. Many heroes have lived before Agamemnon, but they have died unwept because they had no divine poet to record their deeds.¹ So, too, we are left to dark guesswork in almost all that relates to the earliest history of the Masonic Craft in their primary Gild-life, for want of a reliable chronicler.

We may, however, assume, as more than probable, that there must have been for the Freemasons a book of records and of ordinances, just as there were for the other Trade and Craft Companies.

Indeed, Dr. Anderson says, in his second edition, that "the Freemasons had always a book in manuscript called the *Book of*

¹ Horace, *Carm.*, lib. iv, 9.

Constitutions (of which they had several very ancient copies remaining), containing not only their Charges and Regulations, but also the history of architecture from the beginning of time."

Dr. Plot, also, in his *Natural History of Staffordshire*, tells us that the Society of Freemasons "had a large parchment volume amongst them containing the history and rules of the Craft of Masonry." The contents of that volume, as he describes them, agree very closely with what we find in the Old Constitutions.

We have, then, good reason to believe that the manuscript Constitutions, which consist of the *Legend of the Craft* and the statutes or ordinances of the Gild, are all copies of an original contained in the archives of the Company, and this original Anderson says was called the *Book of Constitutions*.

We need not claim that the title given by Anderson is the right one, or that he had authority for the statement. It is sufficient to believe that there was a book in the archives of the Masons' Company, as there was a similar book in the archives of the other Companies, and that the manuscript Constitutions, as we now have them, were copied at various times and by different persons from that book.

But it must be evident, to anyone who will carefully compare these manuscripts, that there must have been two originals at least. The *Legend of the Craft* and the set of ordinances differ so materially in the Regius poem from those in the later manuscripts as to indicate very clearly that the latter could not have been copied from the former, but must have been taken from some other original.

Now, in 1410 there were, according to the catalogue given by Herbert from the London records, two distinct Companies, that of the Freemasons and that of the Masons. We think it is very reasonable to conclude that each of these Companies had a *Book of Constitutions* of its own. If so, the Regius Constitutions may have found their original in the Company of Freemasons, and the later manuscripts, so unlike it in form and substance, may have had their original in the Company of Masons.

If, as Findel and some others have supposed, the Regius Constitution was of German or Continental origin, the prayer to the Four Crowned Martyrs leading to that supposition, then the

fact that this Regius manuscript was copied from the *Book of Constitutions* of the Company of Freemasons would give color to the thought advanced by Brother Mackey, that the Company of Freemasons, as distinguished from that of the Masons in the year 1410, was an offshoot from the fraternity of Traveling Freemasons, who, at an earlier period, are by so many Masonic students supposed to spring from the school of Como at Lombardy in Northern Italy. But we must advise the reader to preserve an open mind on this particular angle of research.

A new charter, or perhaps, a confirmation of the old one, was granted to the Masons' Company in 1677 by Charles II. About this time we might look for some changes in the long-used *Book of Constitutions* of the old Masons' Company, and of which the earlier manuscripts, from the Lansdowne to the Sloane, are examples.

Such changes are found in the Harleian manuscript of the 17th century. This differs in several important points from those that preceded it. Besides the old ordinances, which are much like those in earlier manuscripts, but in somewhat better language, there are in the Harleian manuscript fifteen "new articles," showing a distinction between Company and Lodges.

Article 30, the fifth of the new articles, uses the following words:

"That for the future the said Society, Company, and Fraternity of Free Masons shall be regulated and governed by one Master and Assembly and Wardens as the said Company shall think fit to choose at every yearly General Assembly."

There are several points in this article worthy of attention, as throwing light on the condition of the fraternity at that time.

1. The words *for the future* show that there was a change then made in the government of the Society.

2. The use of the word *Company* shows that these regulations, or "new articles," were not for the government of Lodges only, but for the whole Company. The existence of the Masons' Company is here plainly recognized.

3. The word *Assembly* can not mean that the Company at a General Assembly would choose an Assembly to govern it. But this may be due to a careless copyist writing "Assembly" instead

of "Assistants." In the charters of other Companies we frequently see the provision that besides the Master and Warden a certain number of "Assistants" shall be appointed out of the Gild, to aid the former officers by their advice. For instance, in a charter of the Drapers' Company, after providing for the election of a Master and four Wardens, it is added that there shall be others of the Gild "who shall be named assistants of the Gild or fraternity aforesaid, and from that time they shall be assisting and aiding to the Master and Wardens in the causes, matters, business, and things whatsoever touching or concerning the said Masters and Wardens."¹

Assistants formed no part of the government of a Lodge, but were common in the Livery Companies, and it is evident that the article under consideration, and therefore that the Harleian manuscript containing it, were copied from the Book of the Masons' Company.

4. This article shows that there was a "yearly assembly" of the Company. We are not, however, to infer that this "yearly assembly" of the Masons' Company was, as some of our histories have supposed, a Grand Lodge. If so, as the Master of the Company must necessarily have presided over the General Assembly, he would have been its Grand Master, and as there were other Masons' Companies in other parts of England, there would have been several Grand Lodges as well as several Grand Masters, all of which is unsupported by history. Indeed, neither the words "Grand Master" nor "Grand Lodge" are used in the Old Constitutions. Both titles seem to have been adopted at what is called the Revival, in 1717.

There is a marked likeness between the provisions of the charter granted by Charles II. and those of the Harleian manuscript. To take one reference only from the charter bearing on the above four articles: "All and singular masons, freemen of the City of London, and all other subjects that should thereafter use the art in London or Westminster, or within seven miles compass of the same on either side, should be one body incorporated politic by the name of master, wardens, assistants, and commonalty of the art and mystery of masons."² Either the

¹ See the Charter in Herbert's "Twelve Great Livery Companies," vol. i, p. 487.

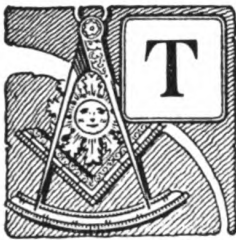
² "Hole Craft and Fellowship of Masons." p. 197.

rules adopted by Lodges for their government were later on put into a royal charter for the general betterment of the trade or the charter provisions were made first but with the same result. The comparison is a very interesting one.

There are some other articles in this Harleian manuscript that are worthy of attention, as showing the condition and customs of the Craft in the 17th century, and which will be further discussed.

CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLIES AND LODGES OF MEDIEVAL FREEMASONS



HERE were two conditions of the Craft in the period between the 14th and 17th centuries which are peculiarly worth the attention of the student of Masonic history. These are the General Assembly of the Craft at stated periods, and their more customary meetings in Lodges. It is to be regretted that the early records of English Freemasonry furnish but the slightest and most unsatisfactory accounts of the transactions of either of these bodies, so that most of our information on this subject is merely by way of inference.

"We possess," says Halliwell-Phillips, "no series of documents, nor even an approach to a series, sufficiently extensive to enable us to form any connected history of the ancient institutions of Masons and Freemasons. We have, in fact, no materials by which we can form any definite idea of the precise nature of those early societies."¹

This is very true, and the historian finds himself halted at every step of his labor in tracing the early progress of the institution.

"We must therefore," as he goes on to say, "rest contented with the light which a few incidental notices and accidental accounts, far from being altogether capable of unsuspected reliance, afford us."

During the years since this passage was written, the industry of Masonic students has brought to light many old records which are "of unsuspected reliance." Though still too few to form a complete series of historic stages, these records enable us to understand better than we did the real condition of the Masonic fraternities in the Middle Ages. Had these records been in Halli-

¹ "Society of Antiquaries," by James O. Halliwell-Phillips. April 18, 1830, p. 444.

well-Phillips' possession when he presented the first of them as a valuable contribution to Masonic history, he would hardly have erred as he did in his belief of the truth of the Prince Edwin story.

The geologist has been able to trace the gradual changes in the earth's surface, and in the character of its living inhabitants at the remotest period, by the fossils which he finds bedded in its strata. The anthropologist, the scientist investigating the development of mankind, learns the true character of prehistoric man from the stone and bronze implements that he has discovered in ancient caves and mounds. So the student can form a correct notion of the state of mediæval Freemasonry from the scattered records of that period, which, long preserved in neglected archives or in the vast collections of the British Museum, have at length been published to the world, to form the materials of trustworthy history.

They confirm many statements hitherto supposed to be without authority, and enable us by their silence to reject much that has been fancifully presented as authentic.

Thus in the manuscript discovered and published by Halliwell-Phillips, and which he very correctly considered to be the earliest document yet brought forward connected with the progress of Freemasonry in Great Britain, we may learn that at least as early as toward the end of the 14th century the Craft met on specified occasions and under certain rules and regulations in a body which they called the "Congregation" or the "Assembly." Of this there can not be the slightest doubt, since the Regius poem is recognized as having been written between the years 1350 and 1400, and as containing an authentic account of the condition of the Craft at that period.

The second article of the Constitutions in this poem stipulates that "every Mason who is a Master, must be at the general congregation if he is properly informed where that assembly is to be held, unless he should have a reasonable excuse."¹

¹ "That every Mayster that ys a mason
Most ben at the generale congregacyon,
So that he hyt resonably y-tolde
Where that the semble schal be holde;
And to that semble he most nede gon
But he have a resenabul skwsacyon."

Regius Manuscript, lines 107-112.

We have spared the reader the out-of-date language, but have given the true meaning in the translation, and added the original in a note at the foot of the page.

From this law it would appear that in the 14th century it was the custom of Master Masons to assemble from various parts of the country for purposes connected with the interests of the Craft.

The Cooke manuscript, whose date is nearly a hundred years later, gives an account of the origin of this custom. The writer says it arose in the time of King Athelstan, who ordered that annually, or every three years, all Master Masons and Fellows should come up from every province and country to congregations, where the Masters should be examined in the laws of the Craft, and their skill and knowledge in their profession be investigated, and where they should receive charges or instructions for their future conduct.

This, however, is a mere tradition, founded on the legend of Athelstan's, or rather Prince Edwin's, Assembly of Freemasons at York. It can not be accepted as a foundation for any historical statement.

But in the same manuscript we find the evidence that it was the custom of Masters coming from their Lodges or places where they worked with the Fellows under them, and their Apprentices, to some sort of gathering presided over by one of the Masters as the principal or chief of the meeting. This is in the second article of the Constitutions, according to the Cooke manuscript and is in the following words, we having put the statement into modern English:

"That every Master should be notified to come to his congregation, that he may come in due time unless excused for some reason. But those who had been disobedient at such congregations, or been false to their employers, or had acted so as to deserve reproof by the Craft, could be excused only by extreme sickness, of which notice was to be given to the Master that is principal of the assembly."¹

Brother Mackey held that this is evidence that in the middle of the 15th century, the date of the manuscript, the custom existed of Masters assembling from different points for consultation,

¹ Cooke manuscript, lines 740-755.

because a law would hardly be made for the due observance of a certain custom unless that custom had a substantial existence. This is not a tradition or legend, but the statement in a manuscript constitution of the existence of a law. The manuscript is admitted to be genuine. That it tells us what were the regulations of the Craft that were in force when it was written is not denied. Therefore, as it gives us the rules that governed Masters in their attendance upon an assembly or congregation of Masters, we must recognize the historical fact that at that time such assemblies or congregations did exist among the Craft of Freemasons.

These assemblies were probably emergent, called as necessity required. If they were held at stated and regular periods, it would hardly have been required that a Master must have received previous notice to render him subject to punishment for non-attendance. This would also lead us to assume that there was some person in whom, by general consent, was vested the authority to name the time of meeting, and whose duty it was to give the necessary warning. Probably this person must have been the one to whom excuses were to be given, and who is styled, in the quaint language of the manuscript, "pryncipall of that gederyng."

What was the circuit within which the authority of such an assembly extended, or what was the distance from which Master Masons were expected to come to it, we must learn from later Constitutions, for the Cooke manuscript leaves us in ignorance on the subject. It tells us only that assemblies were occasionally held, but says nothing of the number of representatives who constituted them nor of the extent of the country which they governed.

This is, however, determined by the other Constitutions. In the Lansdowne manuscript, whose date is one hundred and fifty years after that of the Cooke, it is said that "every Master and Fellow shall come to the Assembly if it be within fifty miles of him." This distance is repeated in other manuscripts, in the York, dated 1600, in the Grand Lodge of 1583, in the Sloane of 1646, in the Lodge of Antiquity of 1686, and in the Alnwick as late as 1701.

There is, however, a difference in some of the Constitutions. The Harleian manuscript, whose ascribed date is 1650, says that the Freemason must come to the Assembly if it be within ten

miles of his abode, and in the Constitutions in the Lodge of Hope manuscript, whose date is 1675-1700, and those in the Papworth manuscript, whose date is as late as 1720, but must undoubtedly have been a mere copy of some older one, the distance is reduced to five miles.

Those who, in this reference to what is called sometimes a congregation, sometimes a general assembly, and once, as in the Papworth manuscript, an association, have sought to discover evidence of the existence before the 18th century of a Grand Lodge for England and a Grand Master presiding over all the Craft in the kingdom, will not find themselves supported by any expressions either in these Old Constitutions or in any other records of the times which will warrant such an explanation of these meetings of the Craft.

The object of these Assemblies, as described with great uniformity in all the Constitutions, was to subject those who had trespassed against the rules of the Craft to the judgment and award of their brethren, and where there were disputes to endeavor to reconcile the difference by a brotherly arbitration. If we may rely on a statement in what is called the Roberts manuscript, from which we get the earliest printed book in Freemasonry, 1722, and which manuscript could not have been later than the latter part of the 17th century, as it mentions the regulations adopted by the General Assembly in 1663, these General Assemblies had also the power of making new laws for the government of the Craft.

This book by J. Roberts has the title of *The Old Constitutions belonging to the Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons*. He says the book was "taken from a Manuscript wrote about five hundred years since," but the internal evidence shows that all of it could not have been written so long ago. It has indeed all the appearance of being a careless copy of the Harleian manuscript, with some additional matter not found in that document, the source of which is not known.

In this book of Roberts are some new regulations said to be "additional orders and Constitutions made and agreed upon at a General Assembly held at . . . on the eighth day of December, 1663."

Dr. Anderson, who, it is very probable, had seen this item in the work of Roberts, with an inaccuracy of which the Masonic

writers of the 18th century were too often guilty, has materially altered the statement in the second edition of his *Book of Constitutions*, and says that "Henry Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans as their Grand Master held a General Assembly and Feast on St. John's Day 27, Dec. 1663."

It will be seen that the Roberts Constitution says nothing of the Earl of St. Albans, nothing of his having exercised the functions or assumed the title of Grand Master, nothing of a feast, and nothing of the time of assembly being on St. John the Evangelist's day, which is a modern Masonic festival. All that Anderson has here said is misleading, and by this act of unfairness, Brother Hughan correctly says, his "character as an accurate historian is certainly not improved."

We have seen that the earlier manuscript Constitutions do not speak of any specific time when the Assembly was held, and it is possible, perhaps probable, that at first they were called only when required, according to the needs of any place where there were Master Masons engaged. This is, however, mere supposition.

But it would seem that about the middle of the 17th century, and perhaps long before, there was instituted an annual assembly.¹ The Harleian manuscript leaves us no doubt upon the point, for it says, "that for the future the sayd Society, company and fraternity of Free Masons shal bee regulated and governed by one Master and Assembly and Wardens, as the said Company shall think fit to choose at every *yearely general Assembly*."

That this was to be done "for the future" might mean that what had formerly been an authorized usage was thereafter to be confirmed as a law by this new regulation.

However, it is very satisfactorily shown by this Harleian document that at the time when it was written, about 1650, the Freemasons met in an annual assembly.

There is another feature in the mediæval condition of Freemasonry, which we may discover from an examination of these old manuscript Constitutions. While it is very clear that the

¹ We must note that "yearly congregations and confederacies made by the Masons in their general Chapters assembled" was forbidden by an act of 3 Henry VI., cap. 1., A.D. 1425; that this was repealed by 5 Elizabeth, 1562, cap. 4., and that Charles II. by the Charter of 1677 provided that eight or more of the Company were empowered to conduct the affairs and that "annually" the Master and Wardens should be elected on June 14. Evidently the custom is very old.

Freemasons were in the habit of assembling annually, or perhaps at more frequent periods, in congregations, for general consultation on the interests of the whole body of craftsmen, they also united in other associations of a local character, which, in the earliest records to which we have access, were known by the name of "Lodges." This was an institution peculiar to the Freemasons. We hear of the Gilds, and afterward of the Company of Carpenters, the Company of Smiths, the Company of Tailors, and others belonging to various crafts, but we have no knowledge that there ever existed any lodges of Carpenters, Smiths, or Tailors. The Freemasons alone met in these local fraternities, which were of course in some way connected with the Company, after it had been chartered, and even before, when it existed as a Gild without incorporation.

The existence of these Lodges is not guesswork, but capable of the most convincing proof from these old manuscripts, whose truth has never been and can not be doubted, as well as from the testimony of other writers, some of them not of Masonic character, and therefore less open to a charge of prejudice.

The proofs of the existence of Lodges in which Freemasons in various parts of the kingdom met may be first presented as they are found in the Old Constitutions.

The Regius poem, the earliest of these manuscript records, plainly refers to the fact. The 4th Article of its Constitutions forbids the Master Mason to take a bondman as an Apprentice. The reason given for this rule is that the lord whose bondman he is has the right to fetch him from any place where he might go, and if he were to take him from the Lodge it would be a cause of great trouble.

"For the lorde that he ys bonde to
May fache the prentes whersever he go.
Gef yn the *logge* he were y-take
Much desese hyt myght ther make."¹

And in the third point of the same Constitutions it is forbidden the Apprentice to tell anyone the private affairs of his Master's house or whatsoever is done in the Lodge.

"The prevystye of the chamber telle he no man,
Ny yn the *logge* whatsoever they done."²

¹ "Regius manuscript." ² See above manuscript."

The Cooke manuscript,¹ which is the next of these old records brought to light by modern researches, repeats these two regulations. It goes more at length into the causes which should prevent a bondman from being made a member, and explains the nature of the trouble, briefly mentioned in the former manuscript, which might arise if the lord should seek to seize his bondman in the lodge. The bondman, it says, should not be received as an Apprentice, because his lord might take him, as he had the right to do, and lead him "out of his *logge* or out of the place where he is working, and the trouble that might then be apprehended, would be that his fellows would peradventure help him and dispute for him and therefrom manslaughter might arise."

The third point of these Constitutions says that the member "hele (must conceal) the counsel of his fellows in *logge* and in chamber."²

Later manuscripts have the same recognition of the lodge as in these first two.

The Lansdowne manuscript says that Freemasons must "keep truely all the councell of the lodge or of the chamber." This is repeated in the later Constitutions. The lodge is also recognized as a place where the work of Operative Freemasonry was pursued, for the Freemason is forbidden to set the cowan to work within the lodge or outside of it.

We see, also, that there were many lodges as distinct organizations, but all connected by one bond of fellowship, though scattered over the country. One of the regulations in these Constitutions was that strange Fellows were to be welcomed and put to work, if there were any work for them, and if not, they were "to be refreshed with money and sent unto the next lodge."

These Operative Lodges were as exclusive in relation to cowans, rough layers, or masons who were not accepted as free of the Gild, as the modern Speculative Lodges are to the uninitiated, or, as they are often called, "the profane."³

Thus we find in the older Constitutions a regulation forbidding employment to "rough layers," or masons of an inferior class, who had not been admitted into the society. "Noe Ma-

¹ "Cooke manuscript," lines 769-777.

² See above manuscript," lines 441-453.

³ Profane, meaning one outside the temple.

son," says a more recent Constitution,¹ "shall make moulds, square or Rule to any Rough Layers, alsoe that noe Mason sett any Layer within a Lodge or without to hew or mould stones with noe mould of his own makeing." In brief, he was to give such an intruder no work connected with the higher principles of the art, for the mould was the model or pattern constructed by the geometrical rules that were the most important secrets of the mediæval builders. Probably these outsiders were sometimes employed in the unskilled labor.

The Papworth manuscript, whose date is about 1720, omits this rule. Whether this omission arose from the growth at that late period of a more liberal spirit, or whether it was the error of a careless copyist, are questions not easily determined. Probably the latter was the case, as the spirit of exclusiveness adhered to the Masonic Gilds as it did to all the gilds of other crafts, and is continued to the present day by the Livery Companies, the successors of the early gilds, where the same limits prevailed.

The system of apprenticeship, common to all the gilds, was maintained with very strict regulations by the Freemasons.

No Master or Fellow was to take an Apprentice for less than seven years, nor was any Master to take an Apprentice unless his business was so large as to need the employment of at least two or three Journeymen. The spirit of monopoly is plainly seen in this regulation. The Fellows or Journeymen were unwilling to give to Masters of moderate means the opportunity, by the employment of Apprentices who might soon learn the trade, to add to the number of Craftsmen and thus to lessen the value of labor.

Great regard was paid to the physical condition of the Apprentice. In all the Constitutions, from the very earliest to the latest, care is taken to declare that the Apprentice must be able-bodied. "The Master," says the Regius manuscript, "shall for no consideration of profit or emolument make an Apprentice who is imperfect, that is whose limbs are not altogether sound. It would be a great disgrace to the craft to make a halt and lame man. An imperfect man of this kind would do but little good to the craft. So every one may know that the craft wishes to have a strong man." The compiler of the Constitutions quaintly adds the warn-

¹ "Alnwick manuscript," anno 1701.

ing that "a maimed man has no strength, as will be known long before night"; that is, he will show his weakness by failing in his work.

" . . . maymed mon, he hath no might,
Ye mowe hyt knowe long yer night."

This was written about 1390. About sixty years afterwards the Cooke manuscript repeats the law thus: "The sixth article is this, that no Master for no covetousness nor no profit take no Apprentice to teach that is imperfect, that is to say, having any maim for the which he may not truly work as he ought to do."

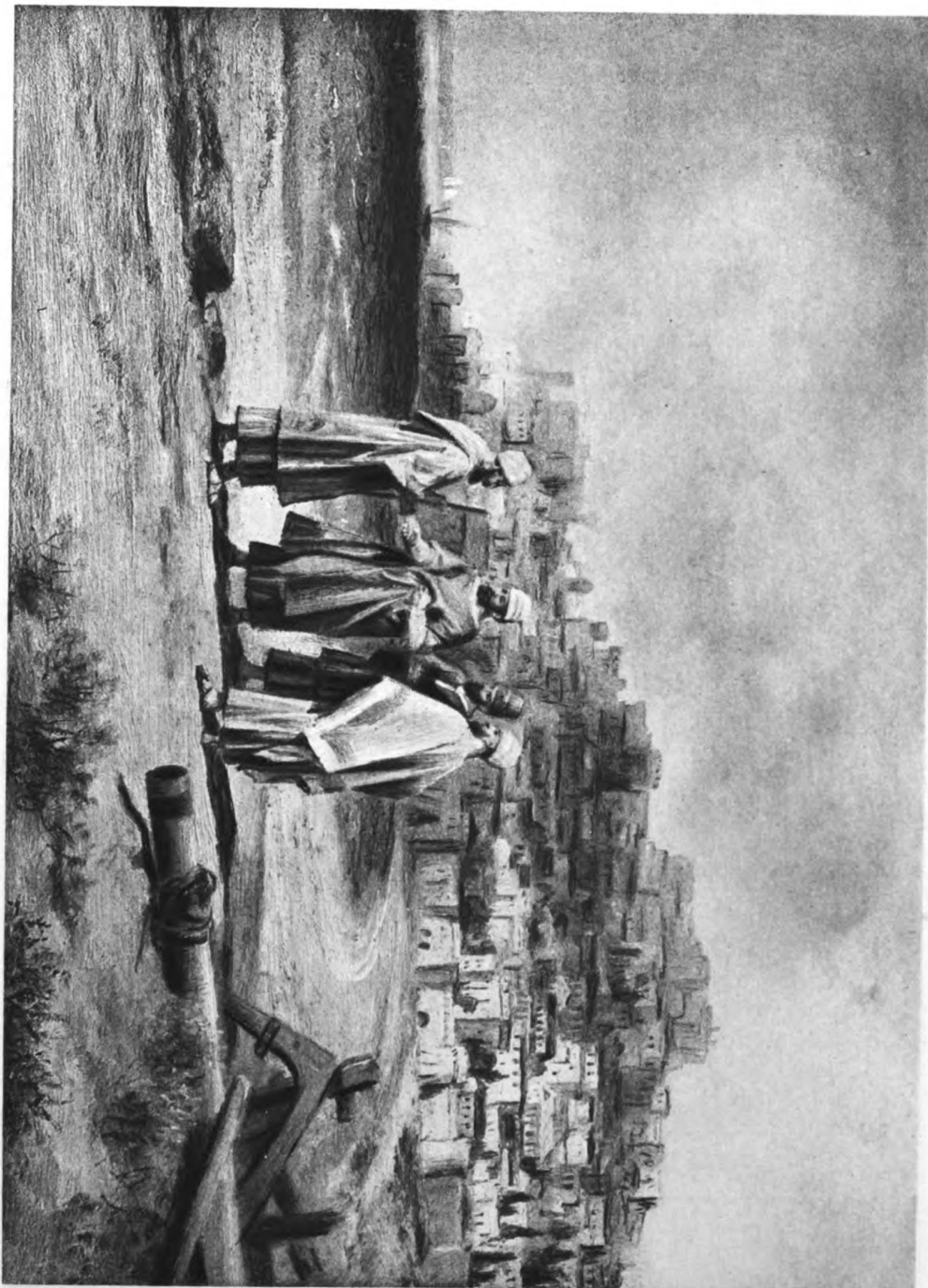
The same rigid rule of physical perfection in the Apprentice is followed in later Constitutions. Thus the Lansdowne manuscript (1600), says "of limbs whole as a man"; the York manuscript (1600), "able of body and sound of limbs"; the Grand Lodge manuscript (1650), "of limbs as a man ought to be"; the Harleian manuscript (1650), "his right and perfect limbs and personal of body to attend the said science," and the Alnwick manuscript (1701), requires him to have "his right limbs as he ought to have."

When, in 1717, the Speculative took hold of the Operative Order, this regulation, enforced for at least three centuries, was shelved. In the charges adopted by the Grand Lodge in 1722, Freemasons were required to be only good and true men, freeborn and of mature age.

Sixteen years later, when Anderson compiled the second edition of the *Book of Constitutions*, he, apparently without authority, restored the original rule of the gild, for in the same charge we find the regulation that the men made Freemasons must be "hale and sound, not deformed or dismembered at the time of their making."

We say that this change was apparently made without authority, for in later editions of the *Book of Constitutions*, published after the death of Anderson, the language of the first edition was restored. Hence the present Grand Lodge of England does not require bodily perfection as a qualification for initiates.

But as Dermott, in compiling his *Ahiman Rezon* or Book of Constitutions, 1756, for the use of the Grand Lodge of the Ancients or the Athol Grand Lodge, adopted Anderson's second edition as the basis of his work, all the lodges springing from that Grand



Lodge exacted the rigid gild law of bodily perfection. As a very large number of the lodges in the United States were chartered by the Grand Lodge of Ancients, it has happened that the old rule of the gild has been retained sometimes in its full extent and sometimes with slight changes in the Constitutions of the American Grand Lodges forbidding the initiation into Freemasonry of one who is deficient in body.

The American usage, however much it may be objected to because it sometimes closes the door of the lodges to otherwise worthy men, has certainly maintained more perfectly than the English the connection between the old Operative and the more modern Speculative branch.

Another fact in the character of the mediæval Gild or Company of Freemasons showing the connection with that association and the Speculative Freemasonry that grew out of it is the system of secrecy that was practiced. We have shown that all the early gilds, whether Masonic or otherwise, required their members to keep the secret counsels of the body. This regulation has been correctly supposed to allude to the secrets of the trade, in their transaction of business if it were a Commercial Gild, or, if it were a Craft Gild, the methods of work. These secrets could only be acquired by a long apprenticeship to the trade or art, and it was unlawful to impart them to any persons who were not members of the gild.

The evidence of this has already been shown by extracts from various gild laws, and from the old Masonic Constitutions. But the secrets of the Gild or Company of Freemasons seem to have been maintained more rigidly by their statutes than were those of any other gild. What the secrets of mediæval Freemasonry were will be discussed when we come to treat of the Traveling Freemasons, who spread in the 11th and 12th centuries over Europe, and established themselves in all the countries they visited; that their arcana or inner mysteries consisted of a secret system adopted by the Freemasons in building. Of this, as Paley¹ has observed, little or nothing has ever come to light, and we may reasonably credit our ignorance on the subject to the conscientious observance by the members of the fraternity of the oath of secrecy taken by them on their admission into the society.

¹ "Manual of Gothic Architecture," by Frederick A. Paley, chap. vi, p. 208.

The earlier Masonic Constitutions do not give the form of the oath, or indeed refer to an oath at all. They simply direct that the counsels of the Lodge and of Freemasonry shall be kept secret. We find, in the Harleian manuscript, supposed to have been written in 1660, the very words of the obligation that was administered. The ordinances of that Constitution prescribe "That no person shall be accepted a Freemason or know the secrets of the said society until he hath first taken the oath of secrecy hereafter following."

The "oath of secrecy" is given as follows, which will on comparison be found to be much more precise and solemn than the oath taken in the other gilds or companies:

"I, A. B., do, in the presence of Almighty God and my Fellows and Brethren here present, promise and declare, that I will not at any time hereafter, by any act or circumstance whatsoever, directly or indirectly, publish, discover, reveal or make known any of the secrets, privileges, or counsels of the fraternity or fellowship of Free Masonry, which at this time, or at any other time hereafter, shall be made known unto me. So help me God and the holy contents of this book."

The last words indicate that this was an oath taken on the Gospels, as was the form always used at that period in administering oaths. As to the language, the intelligent Freemason will readily perceive how closely the spirit of this old Masonic obligation has been preserved by the modern Speculative fraternity. We have here a guidepost pointing out the close connection and the unbroken links between the old and the new systems.

We need discuss no further the laws contained in these Constitutions. The object has been sufficiently attained, of proving the correctness of the claim that our modern Lodges are the direct successors of these bodies whose laws and customs are so plainly shown in the old Masonic manuscripts.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX

THE HARLEIAN MANUSCRIPT AS A GERM OF HISTORY — CUSTOMS OF THE CRAFT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



It has been seen in our discussion how much information as to the practices of the Craft in mediæval times may be derived from the statutes and regulations contained in the old Constitutions, and more especially in that most valuable and interesting one, the Harleian manuscript. This document differs very materially from the others that preceded it. These differences suggest to us that there were important changes which about that time took place in the customs of the Craft.

Of this manuscript, the date of which is supposed to be about 1660, Brother Hughan has truly said that it "contains the fullest information of any that we are aware of and is of great value and importance in consequence."¹ An analysis of this manuscript will sustain the statement of this tireless explorer of old records and to whom we are indebted for a correct copy from the original which is deposited in the British Museum.

No previous analysis, so far as we know, was ever attempted of this important manuscript, to deduce its true character from the internal evidence which it contains, until it was so examined by Brother Mackey.

We have shown that the Masons' or Freemasons' Company received a charter from Charles II. just about the time that the Harleian manuscript appears to have been written. It has also been suggested that the granting of the new charter would probably be very timely for the Company to make some changes in its *Book of Constitutions* by the adoption of new regulations. Therefore, we may fairly suppose that the Harleian manuscript, differing so much, as it does, from preceding manuscripts, is a

¹ "Old Charges of the British Freemasons," p. 11.

copy of the *Book of Constitutions* of the Masons' Company as it was modified in the reign of Charles II.

In presenting us with the laws of the Craft which were at that day in force, it supplies us with a very accurate and trustworthy showing of the customs of the fraternity as they then existed.

Therefore, a brief analysis of some of the most important items will certainly advance us very considerably in our knowledge of the progress of Freemasonry in the 17th century, about a hundred years before the Operative element of Freemasonry was taken over by the Speculative. Hence, Brother Mackey called the Harleian manuscript a germ of Masonic history.

We may profitably commence our analysis of the historical points developed in this manuscript by directing our attention to the origin and meaning of the words "Accepted Mason," which are so familiar at the present day in the title given to the Order as that of "The Free and Accepted Masons."

The 26th Article of the *Harleian Constitutions* directs that "no person shall be *accepted* a Mason, unless he shall have a lodge of five free Masons"; and the next article says that "no person shall be *accepted* a Free Mason but such as are of able body, honest parentage," etc.

The word "accepted" here used is of some importance as having been one of the titles afterward adopted by the Speculative Freemasons, who called themselves "Free and Accepted," in allusion to this very article. The word is employed in the Harleian manuscript. Older manuscripts have the expression "Masons allowed," which evidently means the same thing. In the two articles cited above it is very plain that an "Accepted Mason" is one who has been admitted into the fraternity by some ceremony, which is called his "acception," or acception. It is equivalent to the modern word "initiation."

But in the 28th Article we find the same word used in a double sense, of both "initiation" and "affiliation." There we see that "no person shall be accepted a Free Mason nor shall be admitted into any lodge or assembly until he hath brought a certificate of the time of acception from the lodge that accepted him unto the Master of that Limit and Division where such lodge was kept which said Master shall enroll the same in parchment in a roll to

be kept for that purpose, to give an account of all such acceptations at every General Assembly."

There is a very large and interesting amount of knowledge of the character of the Masonic organization and of its customs in the 17th century to be got from this article, if properly understood.

No one was to be accepted a Freemason, that is, admitted into the fellowship or made free of the Gild or Company, or, as we would say in modern phrase, "affiliated," being other than a "cowan" or "rough layer," one who was not permitted to work or mingle with the Freemasons, unless he had brought to the Master of the limit or division in which a certain lodge was situated a certificate that he had been accepted (the word here signifying initiated or admitted by some ceremony into the craft) in that lodge. The Master of that division or limit must have been possessed of an authority or jurisdiction over several lodges, something like that of the Provincial Grand Masters in England or the District Deputy Grand Masters in the United States. This Master kept a list of the Freemasons thus made whose making had been certified to him and made a return of them to the General Assembly at the annual meeting. This is much the same as is done at the present day, when the lodges make a return to the Grand Lodge at its annual communication of the number and names of the candidates that have been initiated during the year.

Evidently there were two kinds of acceptation. The first acceptation into the lodge, which was also called "making a Mason," and the second acceptation into the full fellowship of the Society or Company, which was to be done only on the production of a certificate of the time and place when the first acceptance or initiation occurred.

We find a like case in the modern practice. A man is first initiated in a lodge, and then he is made a member of it. The one usually follows the other, but not necessarily. A candidate may be initiated in a lodge and yet not claim or receive membership in it. Such cases sometimes occur. The candidate has been *accepted* in the old sense of *initiated*, in the lodge, but if he goes away and desires to be accepted into the full fellowship of the fraternity, which act of his in modern language is called "affiliation," by uniting with another lodge, he can not be so accepted or affiliated into

its fellowship unless he brings a certificate of his previous acceptance or initiation in the lodge in which he was made.

There is an apparent confusion in the double sense in which the word "acceptation" or "acception" is used, which can only be removed by this understanding, which explains the two kinds of acceptance referred to in the same article. This will hereafter be applied to an explanation of some interesting Masonic circumstances that occurred in the life of the celebrated antiquary Elias Ashmole.

One more point, however, in this important article must be first referred to. It is prescribed that when a member is to be made or accepted, it must be in a lodge of at least five Free Masons, one of whom must be a Master or Warden, of the limit or division where the said lodge shall be kept. Masters and Wardens were therefore ranks (it does not follow that they were degrees) in whom alone was invested the right of presiding at the making of Freemasons. It was not necessary that he should be the Master or Warden of the lodge where the initiation or acceptance was made. The lodge might, indeed, be a mere temporary affair, consisting of five Free Masons called together for the especial purpose of accepting a new brother of the Craft. But it was essential that a Free Mason, not a stranger brought from some other section of the country, but one residing or working in the vicinity, and who was not a mere Fellow, but who had reached the rank of a Master or a Warden, should be present and, of course, preside at the meeting.

Preston confirms this in a note in his *Illustrations of Masonry*, where he says:

"A sufficient number of Masons met together within a certain district, with the consent of the sheriff or chief magistrate of the place, were empowered, at this time, to make masons and practice the rites of Masonry without warrant of Constitution."¹

The consent of the sheriff or chief magistrate which Preston supposes to be necessary to the making of a Freemason is not required by the Harleian or any later regulations which represent the Constitutions of the Masons' Company. The Regius poem and the Cooke manuscript, which closely follow it, do say that the sheriff of the county, the mayor of the city, and many

¹ Preston, "Illustrations," Oliver's edition, p. 182, note.

knights and nobles are to be at the General Assembly. We have endeavored to show that the Regius statutes belonged to a different organization of the Craft.

Another expression in this 28th Harleian regulation clears up an important point in the organization of the Masonic fraternity at that time. Of the five Free Masons who were required to be present at the acceptance of a candidate, one was to be a Master and Warden "and another of the trade of Free Masonry." Hence it follows that the other three might be non-Masons, or persons not belonging to the Craft. This is the very best legal evidence that we could have that in the middle of the 17th century non-professional persons were admitted as honorary or associate members into the fraternity. The Speculative element, as we now have it, was of course not then introduced, but the Craft did not consist altogether of working Freemasons.

These explanations enable us to understand the often-quoted passages from the *Diary of Elias Ashmole*, which without them seem to contradict each other. For instance:

"Oct. 16. 4:30 P.M. I was made a Free Mason at Warrington in Lancashire with Colonel Henry Mainwaring of Karincham in Cheshire. The names of those that were then of the lodge (were) Mr. Rich Penket Warden, Mr. James Collier, Mr. Rich Sankey, Henry Littler, John Ellam, Rich Ellam, and Hugh Brewer."¹

The circumstances of the ceremony here detailed are strictly in accord with the regulations which were then in force and which were not long afterward incorporated in the Constitutions as these are preserved in the Harleian manuscript. That document says that at the acceptance of a Free Mason there shall be "a Lodge of five Free Masons." The Lansdowne manuscript says there should be "at least six or seven." The "new regulations" in the Harleian manuscript reduced the number to five, which is the number required at the present day in Speculative Freemasonry for the admission of a Fellow Craft.

Of these five, one was to be a Master or Warden. We find Mr. Rich Penket acting as Warden. Another one of the five was

¹ We copy this item from Brother Conder's "Hole Craft and Fellowship of Masons," pp. 203-204, and he has the following note: "In 1881 (*Masonic Magazine*) Rylands shows that nearly all those present were men of position, and not one of them operative masons, therefore the speculative character of the lodge is evident."

to be "of the trade of Free Masonry." We know what respect was in those days paid to the distinction of rank, that the titles of Esquire and Gentleman were carefully observed, the former having the letters "Esq." affixed and the latter the letters "Mr." prefixed to his name, while the yeoman, merchant, or tradesman was entitled to neither, but was known only by his simple name.

"He who can live without manual labor," says an old heraldic authority,¹ "or can support himself as a gentleman without interfering in any mechanic employment, is called Mr. and may write himself Gentleman."

As Ashmole was a noted scholar and certainly careful about the rules of rank, we may safely conclude that "Mr. James Collier" and "Mr. Rich Sankey" were gentlemen and not professional Masons, while plain "Henry Littler, John Ellam, Rich Ellam, and Hugh Brewer," who are recorded without the prefix "Mr.," were only workmen "of the trade of Free Masonry."

Ashmole had been made a Free Mason; that is, been received as a member of the Craft. As Brother Mackey read the regulations another step was necessary before Ashmole could be accepted into the freedom and fellowship of the Company.

"No person shall hereafter be accepted a Free Mason," says the New Articles, "until he hath brought a certificate of the time of his acceptance from the lodge that accepted him." Further, that "every person who is now a Free Mason shall bring to the Master a note of his acception, to the end the same may be enrolled in such priority of place as the person shall deserve and to the end the whole Company and Fellows may the better know each other."

Brother Mackey says the entries in Ashmole's *Diary* show the way in which Ashmole obeyed this regulation, which was then in full force. Ashmole writes:

"March 1682.

10: About 5 P.M. I recd a summons to appr. at a Lodge to be held the next day, at Masons Hall London.

11. Accordingly I went, & about noone were admitted into the Fellowship of Free Masons.

Sr. William Wilson Knight, Capt. Rich: Boothwick, Mr. Will: Woodman, Mr. Wm. Grey, Mr. Samuel Taylor & Mr. William Wise.

¹ "Laws of Honour," p. 286.

I was the Senior Fellow among them (it being 35 years since I was admitted). There were present beside myselfe the Fellowes after named.

Mr. Tho: Wise Mr. of the Masons Company this present yeare. Mr. Thomas Shorthose, Mr. Thomas Shadbolt, Wainsford Esqr. Mr. Rich: Young Mr. John Shorthose, Mr. William Hamon, Mr. John Thompson, & Mr. Will: Stanton.

We all dyned at the halfe Moone Taverne in Cheapside, at a Noble Dinner prepaired at the charge of the New-accepted Masons."

Brother Hughan vouches for the above as being an exact copy of the two entries in the *Diary* of Ashmole.

A comparison has been made by Brother Conder of these names with the lists of members of the Masons Company of London. He finds that in 1682 Thomas Wise was Master of the Company; John Shorthose and William Stanton were Wardens; also that the following were members: Woodman, Grey, Taylour, William Wise, Thomas Shorthose, Shadbolt, Wainsford, Young, Hamon, and Thompson. He also points out that the others were doubtless members of the Masons Hall Lodge of Freemasons, "where the old Speculative part of Masonry had been kept secretly alive during the troubled state of the country since the Reformation." ¹

To many who have read these two extracts from *Ashmole's Diary*, the eminent writer has appeared to involve himself in a contradiction by first stating that he was made a Mason at Warrington in the year 1646, and afterwards that he was admitted to the fellowship of Free Masons in 1682. But there is really no contradiction. The New Articles in the Harleian manuscript afford one explanation, which was entirely satisfactory to Brother Mackey.

In 1646, while Ashmole was on a visit to Lancashire, he was induced to become a Free Mason; that is, as a non-professional member to unite himself with the Craft. This had been frequently done by other noted men, and the regulations, which are not necessarily of the date of the manuscript, provided for the admission or initiation of persons who were not workmen or professional Masons.

¹ "Hole Craft and Fellowship of Masons," p. 204.

A lodge for the purpose had been called at Warrington. Whether this was a permanent lodge or whether it was only a temporary one called together and presided over by a Warden of that district is immaterial. The *Diary* throws no light on the question. It was, however, most probably a temporary lodge, called together by Warden Penket for the sole purpose of admitting Ashmole and Mainwaring, or making them Free Masons. The regulations authorized this act. The only restrictions were that there should be five Free Masons present, one of whom was to be a Master or Warden and another a workman of the Craft or an Operative Freemason. These restrictions were duly observed.

Brother Mackey says that this act, though it made him a Free Mason, did not admit Ashmole to a full fellowship in the Society.

Persons were often made Freemasons in temporary or occasional lodges. These were dissolved after they had performed the act of admitting new-comers, for which sole purpose they had been organized. It was necessary that the person so admitted should present a certificate of the time when and the place where he had been admitted or accepted, to some superior officer, who is called in the regulations "the Master of that limit and division where such lodge was kept." He was probably the Master Mason who presided over the Craft, who lived and worked in that section of the kingdom, or perhaps also the Master of the permanent lodge, including all the Craft in that division and assembling at stated periods.

This permanent lodge, to which all the Craft repaired, might have been called an "Assembly." If so that would account for the frequent use of the word "Assembly" in all the old manuscripts, the place to which every Freemason was required to go on due notice if it was within five or ten, or, as some say, within fifty miles of him.

This surmise also explains the regulation which says that no one, unless he produced a certificate of his previous acception, could be "admitted into any lodge or assembly," where the words "Lodge" and "Assembly" would seem to indicate two kinds of Masonic meetings, the former referring to the lodges temporarily organized for special purposes, and the latter to the communication of Freemasons in a permanent body upon stated occasions and for the transaction of the general business of the

Craft, and where the certificates were to be presented of those accepted or initiated in the temporary lodge.

Ashmole did not then, or at any time soon after, present such a certificate to the Master of that limit in Lancashire that he had been made a Free Mason in a lodge at Warrington on October 16, 1646. If he had done so we may be sure that he would have mentioned the fact in his *Diary*, which is so minute in its details as to frequently make a record of matters absurdly unimportant.

Accordingly, as is claimed by Brother Mackey, though a Freemason by virtue of his acceptance or making at Warrington, Ashmole was not admitted to the fellowship of the Craft, he was not "free of the Company," was not entitled to an entrance into any of its lodges or assemblies, nor could he take part in any of the proceedings of the fraternity. He was a regularly made Freemason, and that was all; he was in fact very much in the position of those who are called "unaffiliated Freemasons" in the present day.

Thirty-five years afterwards, in Brother Mackey's opinion, Ashmole did what he had neglected to do before, and perfected his relationship to the Craft. On March 11, 1682, he attended the meeting of a lodge held in Masons Hall, the place of meeting of the Masons Company. The lodge was thus held under the sanction of that Company. William Wise, the Master of the Company, was present. In 1646 Ashmole was made a Free Mason; in 1682 he was summoned to the fellowship of the Society at a meeting in London.

A careful reading of the extracts from Brother Ashmole's *Diary* indicates that he was an invited guest at the meeting in London. He may have been more than this but we cannot be sure. Brother Hughan holds that Brother W. H. Rylands has proved that Ashmole's initiation, 1646, was in a Speculative lodge,¹ that he was not a mere "honorary" member but was then admitted to the full privileges enjoyed by the brethren who had elected him.

The account of the acceptance of Elias Ashmole, recorded by himself and therefore of undoubted authenticity, when thus

¹ See article on Freemasonry in the 17th Century published in the *Masonic Magazine*, London, December, 1881.

explained, supplies us with nearly all the details necessary to understand the usages of the Craft in respect to initiations and admissions in the 17th century. They will be more fully analyzed at the close of the present chapter. But it will be necessary first to refer to another authority of great importance on the same subject.

Robert Plot,¹ who was the keeper of the Museum presented by Elias Ashmole to the University of Oxford, wrote, and in 1686 published, *The Natural History of Staffordshire*, in which work he gives an account of the Masonic customs prevailing at that time in the country. Plot was not a Freemason. "The evidence of Dr. Plot is extremely valuable," says Oliver, "because it shows the existence of Lodges of Masons in Staffordshire and the practice of certain ceremonies of initiation in the 17th century in accordance with the regulations laid down in the manuscript Constitution whose authenticity is thus confirmed."

Dr. Plot says that they had in Staffordshire a custom "of admitting Men into the Society of Free Masons, that in the moorlands of this country seems to be of greater request than anywhere else, though I find the custom spread more or less all over the Nation, for here I found persons of the most eminent quality, that did not disdain to be of this Fellowship."

He then proceeds to relate and unfavorably to criticise the *Legend of the Craft*. Continuing his account of the customs of the Masonic Society, he says:

"Into which Society, when they are admitted, they call a meeting (or *Lodg*, as they term it in some places), which must consist at least, of five or six of the *Ancients* of the *Order*, whom the candidates present with gloves, and so likewise to their wives, and entertain with a collation, according to the Custom of the place. This ended, they proceed to the *admission* of them, which chiefly consists in the communication of certain secret signs, whereby they are known to one another all over the Nation, by which means they have maintainance whither ever they travel: for if any man appear, though altogether unknown, that can show any of these signs to a Fellow of the Society, whom they otherwise call an accepted mason, he is obliged, presently to come to him, from what company or place soever he be in; nay, tho' from

¹ Born 1640, died 1696, Fellow of the Royal Society, Professor of Chemistry at Oxford, England.

the top of a Steeple (what hazard or inconvenience soever he run) to know his pleasure and assist him; viz., if he want work he is bound to find him some; or if he can not doe that, to give him mony, or otherwise support him till work can be had; which is one of their Articles; and it is another, that they advise the Masters they work for, according to the best of their skill acquainting them with the goodness or badness of their materials; and if they be any way out in the contrivance of the buildings, modestly to rectify them in it; that masonry be not dishonoured; and many such like that are commonly known; but some others they have (to which they are sworn after their fashion) that none know but themselves.”¹

There is another document of far more importance than those which have been cited, and which gives a more complete description of the customs of the Craft in the 17th century. We refer to the old record known as the Sloane manuscript, No. 3329.

Of the three copies of the Constitutions preserved in the British Museum and known as the Sloane manuscript, the one numbered 3329 is by far the most valuable and interesting. A part of it was inserted by Findel in the Appendix to his *History of Freemasonry*. But the complete text was published by Brother Hughan in the *Voice of Masonry* for October, 1872, and in the *National Freemason* for April, 1873.

There has been some doubt about the exact date of the manuscript. Brother Hughan came to the conclusion that this was written soon after the “Revival of 1717.” Messrs. Bond and Sims, of the British Museum, experts in old manuscripts, suppose that its date is “probably of the beginning of the 18th century.” Bro. Woodford mentions an authority on manuscripts, Wallbran, who declares the language to be of early 17th century use but the paper mark to be of the early 18th century. Finally, Findel thinks it originated at the end of the 17th century, and that “it was found among the papers which Dr. Plot left behind him on his death, and was one of the sources whence his communications on Freemasonry were derived.”

But if Plot used this manuscript in writing his article on Freemasonry, of which there is certainly very strong internal evidence,

¹ Plot, “Natural History of Staffordshire,” chap. viii, p. 316.

then the date of the manuscript could not have been later than 1685, for he published his book in 1686, and therefore if he had this information before him it was most probably written some time before that date.

The Sloane manuscript, No. 3329, British Museum, differs from all the other manuscripts in containing neither the Ordinances nor the *Legend of the Craft*. It is simply a description of the Ritual of the Society of Operative Freemasons as practiced at the period when it was written.

From all these important documents — the *Harleian Constitutions*, the *Diary of Ashmole*, the narrative of Dr. Plot, and the Sloane manuscript — comparing them all with each other and finding that they confirm one another, we are able to form an accurate notion of what were the customs of the Craft in the 17th century, and from that information we may reasonably infer what they were in the 16th and 15th centuries. A careful analysis will lead to the following results:

There was a chartered Company of Freemasons, just as there were incorporated companies of other trades and crafts, such as the Mercers, the Drapers, the Carpenters, the Smiths, etc. As this Company had a charter early in the 15th century, it must have exercised an influence over the Craft from that early period, and the early manuscript Constitutions were doubtless copies of its Gild Book of Laws and Records; but it is not mentioned by name in any of the manuscripts before the middle of the 17th century. There is a frequent allusion to lodges as the place where Masters and Fellows worked, and there are references to an Assembly, which, from the language used, must have been a meeting of several Masters and Fellows. But there is no express recognition of the Company in any manuscript before the *Harleian*. From that time forth the Masons or Freemasons Company seems to have been the head of the Craft in a certain district. There were several of these companies in the various cities, but the principal one was that at London.

However or wherever a person was admitted as a Freemason, he could only be considered as fulfilling all the requirements when he had reported the fact to the superior authority in the district where he was made, whereupon his name was formally enrolled.

There were, besides these companies, lodges in various parts of the country. Some of these lodges, at least toward the close of the century, were permanent bodies. But many were merely temporary groups of Freemasons called together for the purpose of initiating a candidate, who was afterwards reported to the Master of the limit or division in which the lodge had been held.

There was some ceremony, though this may have been a very brief one, at the time of admitting a newly made brother. There were secret signs and words, and an oath of secrecy and fidelity, but there are no documents in existence disclosing beyond dispute the ceremony of initiation.

There is no evidence of several distinct degrees of initiation. Masonic students have the conclusion that what are called in the modern rituals the First, Second, and Third Degrees were the later invention of the Speculative Freemasons of the 18th century. This subject will hereafter be discussed at length in a special chapter.

We readily see that the fraternities of the Operative Freemasons of the 17th and preceding centuries were the germ seed which developed in the 18th century into the full fruit of Speculative Freemasonry. The *Harleian Constitutions* present us with the basis of 'the laws which still govern the institution, the *Diary* detailing Ashmole's reception and Plot's unbiassed account of Freemasonry prove that many customs of the present day were then in existence, and from the Sloane manuscript we learn that certain points of secret instruction which prevailed in the 17th century have been put, with necessary changes of course, into the modern rituals. Comparing the Sloane document with the rituals published soon after the Revival, in 1717, and these again with those of the present day, we see how the later and perfected system has gradually developed out of the one of the middle of the 17th century, and we will be justified in believing that the same system was in existence at a much earlier period.

Not only is there no difficulty in tracing the connection between the lodges of Operative Freemasons existing before the year 1717 with those of the non-operative Freemasons who, in that year, founded the Grand Lodge of England, but it is impossible to avoid the conviction that there was a regular progress whereby the one merged in the other.

We have now arrived at that period in the history of Freemasonry which brings us into touch with affairs just before and also at the organization of the Grand Lodge of England, or, as it is called, the Revival of Freemasonry, in 1717.

But before that subject can be discussed we must return, in our historical inquiries, to the Freemasonry in the sister kingdom of Scotland and on the Continent of Europe, and especially to the Traveling Freemasons, and to the later organization of the Stonemasons of Germany.

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